

# IN THESE TIMES

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# Why Jackson won't dump Farrakhan



The alliance of Louis Farrakhan (center) and Jesse Jackson represents "a new dimension" of black unity, says Lu Palmer of the CBUC.

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

Jesse Jackson's refusal to repudiate Nation of Islam chief Louis Farrakhan is widely supported by the black political strategists closest to the Chicago-based presidential candidate. Furthermore, they say, the ferocious media campaign directed against Farrakhan has provoked a "circle the wagons" mentality in much of the black community. So instead of creating a political albatross, the press has made Farrakhan a galvanizing force for black unity in the Jackson campaign.

A recent meeting in the auditorium of Operation PUSH headquarters here lends credence to their claims. The largest Saturday morning crowd in PUSH history assembled on April 21 to hear a cross-section of Chicago's black leadership voice their unwavering support for the charismatic Black Muslim leader. The crowd, enthusiastic and diverse, had been drawn by widely publicized announcements of Farrakhan's scheduled appearance, and by 9 a.m. the 2,000-seat auditorium was overflowing. The leaders who gathered to sing Farrakhan's praises all accused the news media of deliberately distorting his controversial statements by quoting them out of context. This is being done, they charged, to foster divisions in the unprecedentedly unified black community.

The day before that, Farrakhan was warmly received in St. Louis, at the annual convention of the Conference of Black Mayors, where he accepted an award for "religious excellence" and delivered a stinging keynote speech that earned a rousing, standing ovation.

The comments of Rep. Gus Savage, one of three black Chicagoans serving in Congress, exemplified the tone of the PUSH meeting. He delivered an impassioned defense of Farrakhan's widely reported statements about Adolf Hitler, *Washington Post* reporter Milton Coleman and singer Michael Jackson. Accompanied by the drum rolls and piano arpeggios of the PUSH gospel band, the two-term Congressman said, "I wanted to come here today to make clear my agreement with and 100 percent support of my brother and our great leader, Minister Louis Farrakhan. I support him because his remarks are historically, culturally and politically accurate."

The huge crowd in the PUSH auditorium was an odd amalgam of the black community's more disparate elements—a true product of the unlikely Jackson-Farrakhan alliance. The union of the two leaders has provided the Black Muslim minister access to the ears of blacks who would never have listened to the separatist message of the Nation of Islam in the past. It was startling to observe middle-class, church-going Jackson supporters wildly applauding Farrakhan's strident proposals, including one calling for him to lead blacks in demanding a separate nation if Jackson is "locked out" of the convention in San Francisco.

In addition to the crowd-pleasing antics of those who gathered at PUSH, the Jackson-Farrakhan alliance is being heralded by some of Chicago's most astute black political leaders. "I am extremely proud that Jesse Jackson refuses to repudiate Minister Farrakhan," said Lu Palmer, leader of Chicago Black United Communities (CBUC) and the man many credit for the mayoral victory of Harold Washington. "The joining of Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan represents a new dimension of unity in the black community. And that's very, very important. Those two symbolize the coming together of different thoughts, ideology and religions around one common cause: black political empowerment. This has never happened before and it scares the hell out of white folks. Naturally, they'll do anything they possibly can to shatter that growing unity. So what do they do?

They take Farrakhan's statements totally out of context and play them up all out of proportion and then they call on Jesse to repudiate him. Well, I'm just proud as hell that Jesse is courageous enough to refuse to do their bidding."

In 1973, when Palmer quit his prestigious job as a columnist for the *Chicago Daily News*, he said, "The concerns of black people have no priority in the system of white-controlled media." In 1984, Palmer is just as firm in his attitude about the media and thus Farrakhan's characterization of Milton Coleman as a traitor met with his wholehearted approval. "Black journalists who work for the white media must remain true to the cause of black liberation, and if they don't, then, in a real sense, they are traitors."

While Palmer applauds the Jackson-Farrakhan alliance for adding a harder edge to the civil rights movement, others praise it from another direction. "I think that his association with Jesse has widened Farrakhan's perspective quite a bit and has taken some of the hard edges off his message," noted Nate Clay, editor of the influential black weekly, *The Chicago Metro-News*, and former communications director of Operation PUSH. "If you'll notice, Farrakhan now mentions Latinos and poor whites in his speeches. That's something Elijah Muhammad never did." Clay, who was a leader of Chicago's immensely successful voter registration drive in late 1982, has his finger firmly on the pulse of the city's black community and he senses something monumental.

"This thing is much more than just Jesse and Farrakhan," he said. "It's almost metaphysical in that it resists any kind of sociological analysis. I think it has something to do with the fact that black people have a strong streak of black nationalism in their cores."

Clay has a point. Two major strains of thought have dominated the black liberation movement throughout its history: militant assimilationists (civil righters) and separatists (black nationalists). And, though the civil rights strain has received most public exposure (the strategies of this strain are usually more confrontational), it is the nationalist strain that generally attracts the largest following. Membership in nationalistic groups tends to swell when racial antagonisms increase in the general society.

The appeal of Booker T. Washington's proto-nationalism soared during the K.K.K.-plagued days of the counter-reconstruction. The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) of Marcus Garvey reached its peak right after the Red Summers of 1919 and 1920. The '30s and '40s saw the public success of black self-help sects like those of Daddy Grace and Father Divine. As Americans sink into the Reaganomic '80s with the black unemployment rate at its highest point ever and hope for a brighter future near its lowest point, conditions couldn't be better for a black nationalist revival.

"You know, some of our people estimate that Farrakhan was responsible for about 100,000 black votes in New York City alone," Clay revealed. "That's his home turf and he did a lot of campaigning for Jesse. He did the same thing in Philadelphia and Jesse pulled nearly 80 percent of the black vote. And, remember, this was after all of the media flap started about him. A lot of people underestimate Farrakhan's appeal."

The Jackson-Farrakhan phenomenon may defy practical analysis for Clay, but for Robert Starks, a longtime Jackson confidant and a leading figure in Chicago's fledgling black independent political movement, the union of the two men is profoundly practical.

## THE STORY INSIDE

"Jesse has nothing whatsoever to lose from embracing Farrakhan," Starks said. "This is a historic alliance—an alliance that's been forged between two segments of our community that have traditionally been at war with each other. Do you think Jesse's going to throw all of that away just because he might lose the votes of people who really weren't going to vote for him anyway? All of these protests from the white left... The white left never supported Jesse. Even before the 'Hymie' revelations, none of them—the Peace Movement, the Anti-Nuke people, the Environmentalists—none of them gave Jesse any real measure of support."

Thomas Todd, the co-founder of Operation PUSH who is now one of Jackson's closest campaign advisers, sees criticism of Farrakhan simply as an attempt to derail the Jackson candidacy. "We have become a catalytic force and white America is scared. The unity of these two men is critical to black America. Louis Farrakhan is critical to black people. Do not attempt to write off Louis Farrakhan, white America, he is one of us. We know the tricks now; we remember how you divided Booker T. and W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm [X] and Martin [Luther King] and how you tried with Jesse Jackson and Harold Washington. We're not going to be tricked anymore. White America is afraid because we're together and we're going to stay that way."

Directly following Farrakhan's appearance at the April 21 PUSH meeting, a news conference was called to explain why a coalition of black groups had decided to boycott the *Chicago Sun-Times*, a publication recently purchased by Rupert Murdoch. The boycott was provoked by a *Sun-Times* headline that read "Jesse Pal: Hitler great, but..." The coalition has delivered a list of more than 30 demands to *Sun-Times* publisher Robert Page.

Although there are many in the black community who have serious questions about Louis Farrakhan's sudden prominence and his effect on the Jackson campaign, it's a good bet those questions will be kept on hold for a while.

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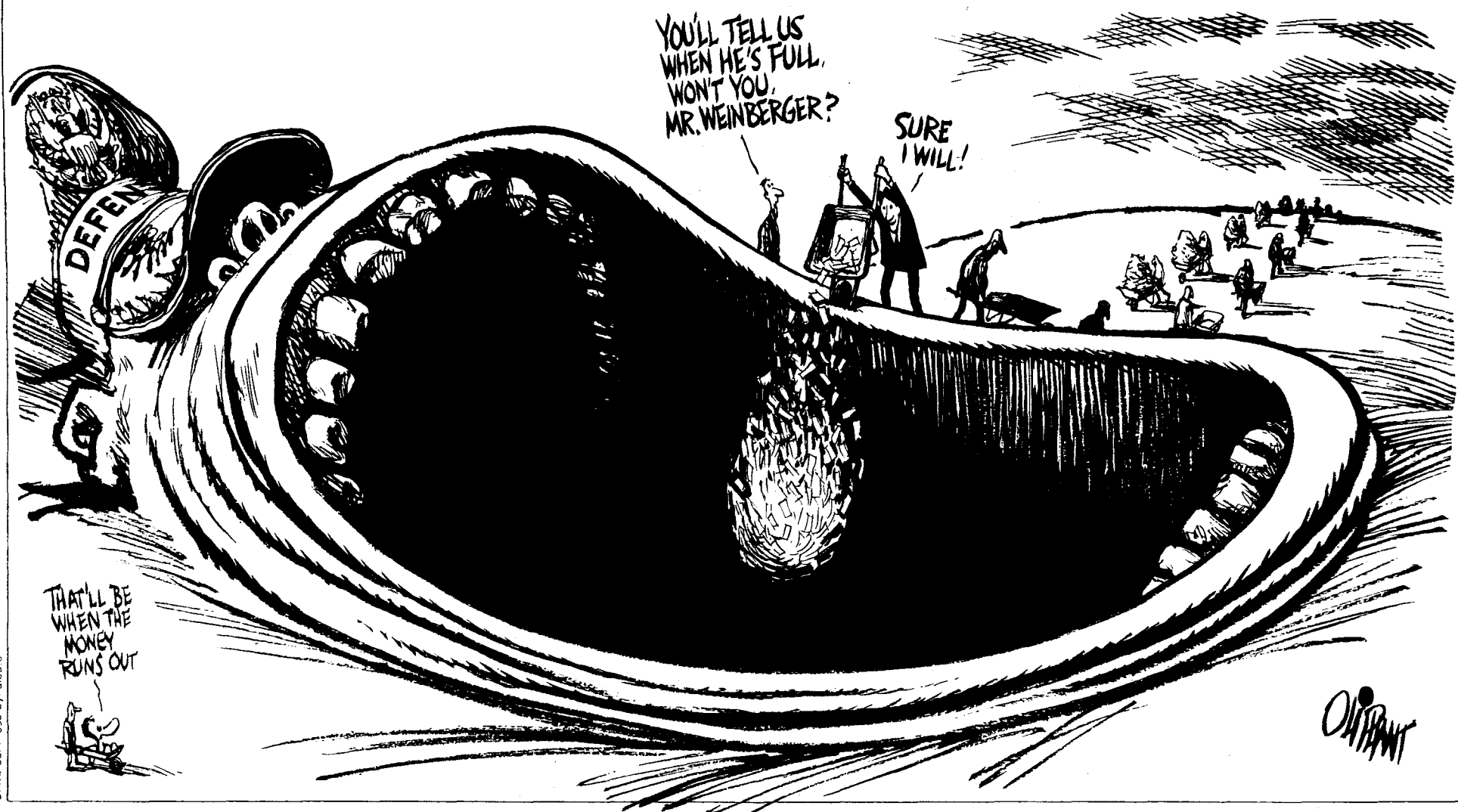
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## IN THESE TIMES



# Congress debates military spending

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**T**HE MAJOR QUESTION CONCERNING the Reagan administration's fiscal year 1985 budget will be how much Congress is willing to reduce the proposed 13 percent real increase in military spending. Under pressure from the Senate Republican leadership, the administration has already agreed to go down to a 7.8 percent increase, but other Senate and House members are pressing for less.

Senate Armed Service Committee members Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.), now known for their dovishness, have called for 4 percent increases. The House has already agreed to a 3.5 percent ceiling on the military budget, and some House members like Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-CO) want zero growth.

Different perspectives inform these budget alternatives. Some senators like Hollings are primarily concerned with the deficit economies of the military budget and not with the budget's specific contents.

Other House and Senate members, led by the 80-member Military Reform Caucus, are attacking not only the perennial waste, fraud and abuse contained in the budget, but also the military tactics and strategy that are implicit in it. The Caucus, made famous now by Sen. Gary Hart (D-CO), has called for replacing expensive high-technology weapons with cheaper, more numerous, less complicated ones.

Some reformers like Nunn are focusing on the Reagan administration's plan to equip American forces—the Navy, in particular—with the means to fight a global war. Nunn has favored replacing this strategy of "horizontal escalation" with one that relies on American allies and only focuses on certain fronts.

A few House members like Rep. Don Dellums (D-CA) have gone beyond the premises of military reform to question the purpose for which the weapons systems are to be used. They argue that if the U.S. eschewed its attempt to police the Third World, it could drastically reduce the military budget.

Last month two studies on the 1985 military budget were published with a view toward influencing the current debate. The centrist Brookings Institution released a pre-publication draft of MIT Professor and former Pentagon official William Kaufmann's analysis of the budget, and the libertarian

Cato Institute published Georgetown University Professor and former Pentagon analyst Earl Ravenal's *Defining Defense, the 1985 Military Budget*.

Ravenal's sweeping indictment of the military budget is as bold as Kaufmann's is cautious. Ravenal, like Dellums, locates the size of the military budget in American foreign-policy objectives. Kaufmann plays a careful game of numbers and weapon-by-weapon analysis typical of the military reformers. But while Ravenal's long-term budget proposals—a 45 percent cut—are far more extensive than Kaufmann's, his current proposal for a spending freeze is very similar to Kaufmann's. And while Kaufmann claims that he is not challenging "basic national strategy," his proposals do implicitly challenge foreign policy.

## Questionable objectives.

Kaufmann presents an "efficient" alternative to the Reagan 1985-89 budget plan. But Kaufmann's concept of efficiency is similar to the broader one employed by the military reform group. He is not concerned with how to produce weapons most efficiently, but with what military strategy most efficiently serves American "national strategy."

Kaufmann believes the Reagan budget can be made more efficient by eliminating redundancies, slowing the development of weapons systems and abandoning "questionable objectives." He cites 30 weapons in 1985 budget, including the MX missile and the B-1B bomber, that can be eliminated because their functions will be performed by other weapons that are being developed. Citing the revised CIA estimates of

Soviet military growth—about half previous estimates—Kaufmann rejects the administration's claim that the current pace of weapons development is necessary to pull even with the Soviet Union.

He argues that administration military objectives are both unrealistic and unwise. According to Kaufmann, the administration "miscalculated its ability to convert general statements about protracted nuclear war, horizontal escalation, and indefinite worldwide, conventional conflict into programs that could be implemented at acceptable cost." While the administration has continued to press for some programs appropriate to these aims, it has had to settle, in practice, "for the basic strategy... established by Presidents Nixon and Ford in the mid-'70s."

Kaufmann argues that the declared administration objectives are also unwise or dangerous. In place of the administration's nuclear war-fighting scenario, he proposes a "countervailing strategy" of moving toward a submarine and air-based force capable of a second strike against Soviet military and industrial targets, but not against major cities. Kaufmann rejects administration plans for space-based missile defense and for command-and-control facilities that could survive a nuclear war. By suggesting that NATO forces can discourage a Soviet advance, Kaufmann also implicitly endorses the Bundy-Kennan-McNamara-Smith "no-first-use" pledge.

Kaufmann gives no credence to the administration horizontal escalation strategy and to its plans for a 600-ship Navy. Like Nunn, he believes the U.S. must resign itself to a strategy focused on defending Western

Europe, the Persian Gulf and South Korea.

Kaufmann's "efficient" budget would reduce the Reagan administration's five-year proposals by \$175 billion and would virtually freeze military spending for 1985. His proposals would also, if only implicitly, reject the Reagan administration's plans for restoring American ability—lost after the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War—to intervene globally and to face off the Soviet Union in a showdown.

Kaufmann's proposal amounts to a significant retreat in American foreign and military policy—comparable to that signalled by, but not explicitly stated in, the Bundy-Kennan-McNamara-Smith no-first-use pledge.

## Neo-isolationism.

Ravenal makes explicit and raises those parts of Kaufmann's critique that impinge upon American foreign policy. He rejects the military reformers' argument that the military budget can be substantially reduced without altering foreign-policy objectives. According to Ravenal, the elimination of waste, fraud and abuse would cut at best several billion dollars from the budget, while some of the reformers' alternative weapons systems—like Hart's small carrier navy—would actually raise total costs.

Ravenal rejects the view—popular on the left—that the military budget can be substantially cut by eliminating destabilizing strategic systems like the MX. He points out that strategic systems only make up 23 percent of the 1985 budget. The greatest portion of the budget goes for fulfilling American obligations to use conventional forces to protect its allies in Europe (\$129 billion), Asia (\$47 billion) and the Persian Gulf and elsewhere (\$59 billion). To cut these expenditures, one must be prepared to reduce American commitments.

Ravenal writes, "It isn't dim-witted generals and grasping defense contractors that are driving up the price of our forces and weapons. It is determined, capable adversaries and the requisites of modern combat. Our choice... is whether to fight in those environments and against those adversaries, or not."

He argues that substantial cuts require a revision of American foreign policy, but he dismisses the view that one can simply reject the Reagan administration's egregious policies. Ravenal regards the Reagan administration's foreign policy and military strategy as a continuation of the Carter administration's post-Afghanistan strategy. Like previous

*Continued on page 10*

**Like Rep. Ron Dellums, Earl Ravenal of the Cato Institute locates the size of the military budget in foreign policy objectives. To cut the military budget, the U.S. must stop policing the world, Ravenal argues.**



## No stopping Diablo

Vigilant court work by Mothers for Peace has not been able to halt the reinstatement of the low-power license at Diablo Canyon's nuclear power plant. Despite an independent review that found malfunctions in the piping system at the problem-ridden plant—the Nuclear Regulatory Commission voted 4-1 on April 13 to allow Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) to start low-power tests. Three days after the vote, Mothers for Peace lawyers Larry Goldberg and Joel Reynolds filed an emergency motion to stop PG&E in the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. When this failed, they asked for a rehearing, which was also summarily denied. As *In These Times* went to press, Diablo was expected to "go critical" last weekend. The only possible hold-up was on PG&E's end: a newly found leak in the reactor's cooling pumps had kept plant engineers busy for several days.

## The phantom strikes again

Overcharges on electric bills are not uncommon. But the nation's electric companies collected \$5.1 billion in tax overcharges from consumers in 1982 that weren't passed on to the government, according to the Environmental Action Foundation (EAF). When added to 13 years of similar overcharges, a total of \$34 billion in taxes has been added to the utility companies' coffers—or \$405 for each U.S. household.

The case of the "phantom taxes" is full of tax-code jargon but boils down to an oft-heard story: like many other businesses, electric utilities receive tax breaks when they make new investments. Instead of passing these breaks on to the consumer—a practice that was outlawed in 1969, thanks to utility lobbyists—these deferred taxes are placed in a special account to be used at the utility companies' discretion. In the meantime, consumers are making a never-ending loan to their electric companies often without knowing it and certainly without having any say in how the money is used. Richard Morgan of the EAF labeled the deferred tax accounts "a \$34 billion slush fund to finance imprudent investments." He also accused the power industry's recent abandoning of more than \$10 billion in plant construction to the poor planning that comes from this strong money-making incentive. In April, Rep. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) introduced the "Phantom Tax Reform Act" to slow down the spiraling accumulation of deferred taxes. The bill would give state utility commissions the right to decide whether taxpayers would be charged phantom taxes.

## Marching in Santa Cruz

The left squeaked by in Santa Cruz last week—winning an election challenge that threatened to depose City Council member Jane Weed and swing the City Council to conservative control, reports Bob Johnson. As a result of the conservative Citizens Against Voter Fraud suit (see *ITT*, Feb. 29), Judge Harry Brauer questioned more than 300 voters from the University of California campus to determine their residence and their vote in last November's election. After three months of testimony, the Superior Court judge discounted 110 votes. The pre-challenge margin of victory between Weed and her closest rival, conservative Bill Fieberling, was 145 votes; after the judge's ruling, Weed won the election by a mere 35 votes.

Although retaining 4-3 control over City Council, the leftists had little reason to rejoice. The court case was expensive and Judge Brauer refused to have the losers pay court costs. The \$30,000 collected for the defendants' court fees drains from the pool of donations usually earmarked for upcoming elections. Judge Brauer's ruling also contained what many leftists thought to be a warning to the students: "The University community marches overwhelmingly to one drum, and on issues with ideological overtones it is a different drum from that which paces the majority of the rest of the city."

## For those who've had enough

It was one more series of stories about black single mothers—or "Homes without Fathers"—in the Baltimore *Sun* last year and the black community in Baltimore had had enough. Tired of the stereotyped reporting that focused on the black community only to judge whether its families fit into the acceptable Ma and Pa mold, the NAACP of Baltimore decided to persuade the *Sun* management to be more responsive to blacks. In a city that's 55 percent black, publisher Reg Murphy explained the lack of black writers and editors—less than 1 percent—by saying that "they couldn't find any." The NAACP gave Murphy and the *Sun* six demands—including finding a fair proportion of black journalists, establishing an Africa bureau and covering the Baltimore black community in a comprehensive way—and were first scoffed at by Murphy and his editors.

Undaunted by the refusal, Samuel Banks of the NAACP then called for a *Sun*less Sunday and a *Sun*less Monday on February 19 and 20. Long picket lines outside the *Sun* and 10,000 pledges to cancel subscriptions finally forced Murphy back to the bargaining table a month later. Murphy met all six NAACP demands. In a recent article in the *Village Voice*, NAACP consultant John Davis called for a boycott of the *New York Post* and other papers with incomplete or insulting coverage of black issues.

—Beth Maschinot



Photographer unknown

Haitian immigrants have experienced a "stark pattern of intentional discrimination."

## "Haitian Program": legal discrimination

WASHINGTON—In a surprising decision in a federal court in Atlanta last month, 12 judges reaffirmed the Reagan administration's right to discriminate against refugees on the basis of their nationality. While the decision handed down concerned Haitian immigrants, it will affect all "aliens" who come to the U.S. seeking haven and are met at the borders by Immigration and Naturalization (INS) officials.

In 1981, the INS initiated a "Haitian program" that was supposed to speed up asylum applications. The prosecutor in *Jean vs. Nelson* claimed that this program actually denied Haitians their right to counsel, due process and equal protection under the law, and adequate translators. In 1982 the lower courts found that a policy against Haitians did exist. A three-judge panel in Atlanta found a "stark pattern of intentional discrimination" against the "black boat-people."

The discrimination included hearings held behind closed doors without Creole translators, refugees without assigned lawyers and overworked immigration judges often presiding over 60-70 cases a day. The Haitians were detained throughout these hearings, sometimes for months or years at a time.

The federal court, while not denying these charges, held that the president and the attorney general have the right to discriminate on the basis of nationality following the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. Haitians, as well as other newly arriving refugees, have no constitutional protections while in detention or out on parole, according to the court. Also, the court ruled that the INS has no legal obligation to inform these new arrivals of their right to apply for asylum—a right guaranteed by the Supreme Court.

Detention has not been an official part of immigration policy since 1954, when Ellis Island was shut down. Individual Salvadorans, Mexicans and others have been detained while their status is being determined, but not until the massive influx of Haitians in 1980 has the INS made detention an official procedure.

An immigration task force of Cabinet members appointed by Reagan in 1980 recommended a policy of detention to curb future influxes of immigrants. President Reagan approved of the measure on July 30, 1981. Although at that time the Haitian Program was already in place, his directive to implement a detention policy gave legitimacy to the program.

The recent court decision was hailed by INS Commissioner Alan C. Nelson, defendant in the suit. Nelson termed the ruling "a clear victory for the Reagan administration. This decision re-emphasizes the nation's sovereign right to control its borders." It will also give Nelson extra ammunition in his request for an additional \$93 million to add to the INS 1984 budget of \$54 million.

—Allan Ebert-Miner

## Czech dissident opposes arms

BERKELEY, CA.—Bulgaria and Romania refused the Soviet missiles. In East Germany the Lutheran Church is serving as a base of opposition to the deployment of Soviet SS-21 medium-range nuclear missiles. Now the weapons are being stationed in Czechoslovakia for the first time, and the deployment is serving as a challenge to the European peace movement, both East and West.

The official Czech govern-

ment and the official Czech peace movement view the nuclear missiles as a sad but wise decision forced upon the Czech people by the stationing of NATO Cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe. But the unofficial Czech peace movement rejects both sides' weapons and claims that the issue of human rights in the Warsaw Pact countries cannot be divorced from the nuclear issue.

"The Cold War is not only the very reason for the existence of the nuclear threat, it is also the finger on the trigger," said Zdena Tomin, a spokeswoman for a Czech human rights group, Charter 77. She concluded that the only solution to the nuclear threat in Europe is to "smash the Cold War." Tomin voiced her views on a recent speaking tour of the Bay Area.

The recent stationing of Soviet missiles in Czechoslovakia has broken the political lethargy that many Czechs have felt since the Soviet invasion of 1968. "Suddenly the fact that the missiles are being deployed on their own territory drove home the reality of the threat. We have been made not only potential murderers, we've been made targets. Suddenly things happened which haven't happened since 1968," said Tomin.

Charter 77 activists were rounded up and warned not to speak out on the missile deployment. The Czech government told them that "any attempt from their side to protest the deployment and any attempt to make contact with the Western peace movement after the deployment will be considered subversive activity." This "weakening the socialist defense" can carry a prison sentence of 10 to 15 years, according to the Charter 77 spokeswoman.

to collect signatures in support of the missiles was met with massive public indifference. "This time there were whole factories where the workers flatly refused to do so—something that hasn't happened since 1968," said Tomin. The official



Communist Party daily *Rude Pravo* published letters from readers protesting the deployment, which led Tomin to assume that the protest must have been so large it couldn't be ignored.

Then late last year, a petition circulating in Prague and Brno protesting the deployment of all nuclear weapons in Europe was signed by more than 2,000 people. Although an insignificant number by Western standards, in Czechoslovakia this was a major political statement. "Signing a petition like that," Tomin told a crowd of anti-nuclear activists in Berkeley, "takes great courage. Everyone knows what it means: your whole life is going to change. You're suddenly going to be made an outcast."

Although the threat of government reprisal looms larger for the unofficial Eastern European peace movements than for peace groups in Western Europe and the United States, both groups have to avoid being used as propaganda tools by the opposing superpower. While the Soviet Union is willing to use the Western peace movement for its own anti-U.S. purposes, the Reagan administration is equally bent on portraying dissident groups like Solidarity and Charter 77 as supporters of U.S. policy objectives.

The recent dialogue between the peace movements of the East and the West is an attempt to carve out a European middle-ground between the two superpowers—a response to the nuclear threat that is also a response to the Cold War.

Charter 77 did not begin as an anti-nuclear movement. Its main purpose is to pressure the Czech government to live up to the Helsinki human rights agreement signed in 1976. Tomin and some members of Charter 77 are now trying to challenge the Western reasoning that we can achieve peace first and then worry about human rights. They also find fault with other Eastern Euro-

pean dissidents who think a strong Western nuclear force is the only way to bring pressure on their own governments to improve the condition of human rights.

Charter 77 is also split on the question. But Tomin sees nuclear disarmament and human rights as inseparable: "I feel that we cannot have a lasting peace without democracy, without fundamental human rights. And what human rights and fundamental freedoms do we have if we destroy this planet? For me there is no contradiction."

—Paul Rauber

## Hondurans: "U.S. leave"

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS—When the people of Trujillo, a poor port town on Honduras' Caribbean coast, first heard the U.S. soldiers were coming to a military base nearby, they were pleased, thinking that the Yankees would bring money to their sleepy town. However, when Raul Velasquez, director of the Institute for Socioeconomic Research, went to talk to a group of workers in Trujillo recently, he found that their initial enthusiasm had turned to bitterness.

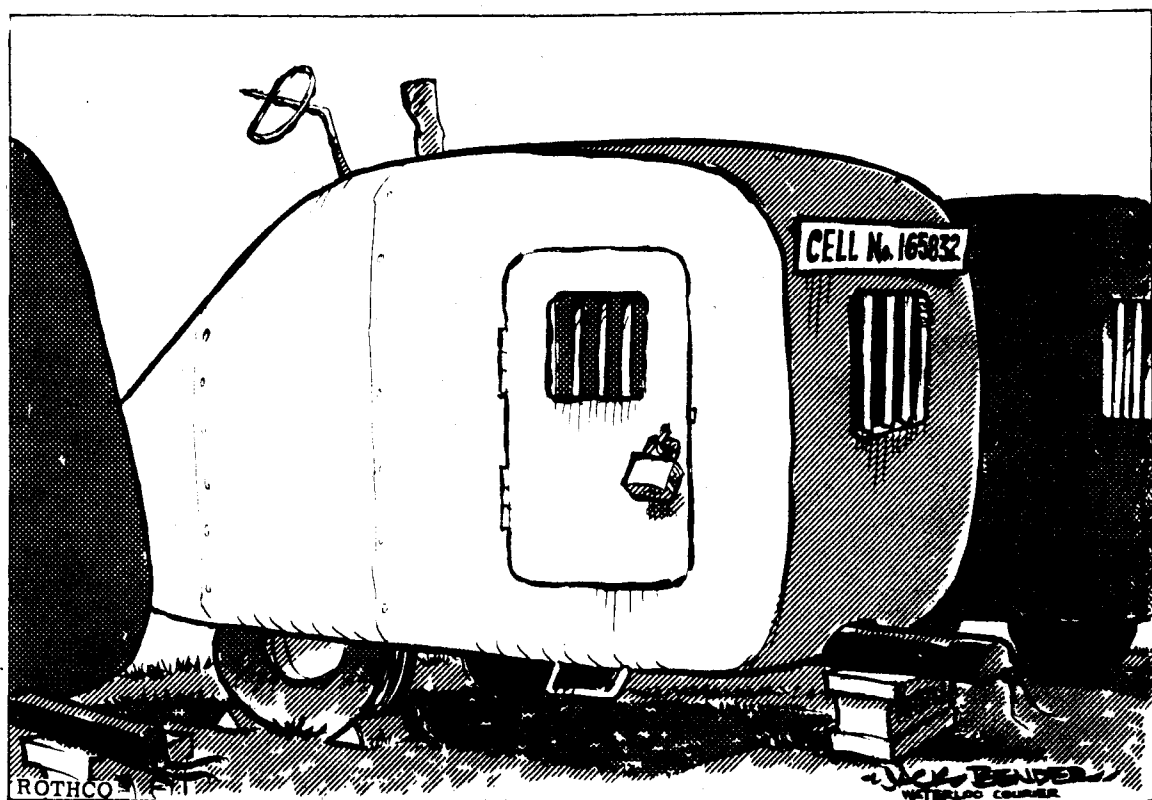
At first, workers said, there were jobs for people on the base, washing laundry and making tortillas. But an order from the U.S. command soon came down calling for less contact between the soldiers and the townspeople, and the military brought in machines to wash the clothes and make the tortillas. "Isn't anyone working on the base now?" Velasquez asked. "Yes—40 people," he was told. "They're cleaning latrines."

Velasquez says the Hondurans all over the country are beginning to resent the Americans' treatment of them, and estimates that public opinion is turning against the American troops. Jorge Arturo Renia, a congressman and leader of the dissident wing of the ruling Liberal Party, has a similar story to tell. "When you invite your neighbor to live in your house for a while, for the first month everything is fine. In the second month, you begin to ask, 'When is he going to leave?' By the third month you begin to hint that it's time to go. By the fourth month you've started turning off the water and the electricity. That's what's happening in Honduras right now."

Renia adds that at every political meeting—no matter what the organization—the discontent toward the U.S. is beginning to show. "They say all the foreigners should go. Some say it in public and some say it in private, but we all say the same thing."

U.S. military officials say that 1,700 U.S. troops are stationed in Honduras, but this doesn't include those who come for the "military exercises" that have involved up to 5,500 troops during the past year. Thousands are expected for the Granadero I exercises that started April 2 and will continue through the spring.

—Beth Stephens



## Briefing: Prisons go private for profit and "border control"

At the far end of the flight line at the Roswell Industrial Air Center in the flat, arid lands of southeastern New Mexico, an empty and unimposing building stands behind a long fence equipped with security lighting and alarms. Connected by a private road to the main highway, this former Air Force Alert Facility is not readily seen from the airport terminal. It is unused at present. But, if the federal government awards a contract to Behavioral Systems Southwest, it will soon become a privately operated detention center for "illegal aliens."

Plans for the aging facility are part of a new concept of private prison systems. In addition to contributing to the Reagan administration's efforts to halt illegal immigration, the business community of Roswell sees the proposed detention center as an unexpected windfall that could bring the town nearly \$6 million annually, create an estimated 100 new jobs for the local labor market, and increase air traffic to Roswell.

The "prisons-for-profit" venture was launched two years ago by Corrections Corporations of America, a company formed by Tennessee attorney Tom Beasley and financed by the Massey-Burch Investment Company.

Beasley and other potential investors discussed a proposal that would bring private enterprise into the "corrections market," and enable private corporations to build and operate high-quality prisons at a lower cost than current, inefficient government operations. Beasley views the new industry as a "productive, profitable and humanistic alternative" to the costly and over-crowded prisons in our nation today.

Corrections officials, skeptical of the private prison concept, would not consider subcontracting for the management of any existing or proposed penitentiaries. So Beasley turned to a more receptive branch

of government, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which contracts with private companies for short-term minimum-security confinement for illegal immigrants. Corrections Corporations of America has built a 300-bed institution in Houston, Texas for immigrants and has more than a dozen similar projects under consideration.

Beasley's successful example prompted a second entrepreneur to enter this potentially lucrative field. Ted Nissen, a former San Quentin guard and retired parole officer, formed Behavioral Systems Southwest and opened a detention center in Pasadena, California. Once a convalescent home, the facility is now surrounded by fences with coiled razor-stripped wire. The detention center confines 125 undocumented immigrant men, women and children serving one to six month sentences for the crime of chronic "border-jumping." Austerity is the key to profitability. Many beds jam each room, and activities are seldom provided for the children. Families are separated. Men are not allowed to live or even dine with their wives and children.

"This is what a business person does," says Nissen. "I've got to think that way. I've got to think like Colonel Sanders."

Nissen's proposal to build a similar facility in Roswell, New Mexico, has raised opposition from local religious organizations. Even though Nissen is able to argue with considerable force that imprisoning undocumented people in private facilities is more humane than the current practice of throwing undocumented persons into federal prisons or local jails, many disturbing questions remain unanswered by the private-sector prison owners.

"What civil and human rights could be violated without anyone even knowing it?" asks Fr. Forest McAllister of the New Mexico Conference of Churches (NMCC). "This

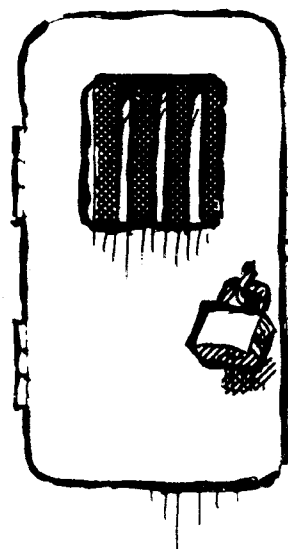
doesn't address the underlying causes of why people flee their homes," adds Barbara Chase of the NMCC.

In a statement adopted by its general assembly, NMCC pointed out that there are two major categories of undocumented people—those seeking work and those seeking refuge. Among the first category, many are living as productive members of our society, paying taxes but not receiving their share of benefits, and facing harassment and financial exploitation. The second category is composed of ever-increasing numbers of political refugees fleeing repression in their homelands. Many of these people are being returned without due process of law to their place of origin. There they face possible imprisonment, torture, or death.

The answer to the illegal immigration problem, according to NMCC, lies not in the building of a franchise-prison system in the image of Colonel Sanders' chain, but in the recognition by the U.S. government of the basic rights of people who are often uprooted because of U.S. foreign policy decisions.

Until legislative and executive decisions implement these rights, prisons for profit will increasingly dot the southwest U.S. landscape.

—Jack Kutz





## IN THE NATION

## CHICAGO

## Will neighborhood jobs win "war" for Washington?

By David Moberg

## CHICAGO

**I**N A MUDDY PARKING LOT, UNDER skies that were unseasonably gray and cold for late April even in Chicago, Mayor Harold Washington and a small band of city officials, local politicians and neighborhood promoters gathered to announce the beginning of a new economic development program—"Chicago Works Together."

That slogan stood in sharp contrast to the political climate of the mayor's first year in office. Washington has endured constant attack from the City Council majority aligned with his arch-foe, county Democratic Chairman Ed Vrdolyak. And he has given rhetorically as much as he has taken, calling Vrdolyak, for example, a "three-card monte hustler" and his opponents "scurrilous, low-life incompetents."

But the parking lot appearance may be symbolic of a new turn in Washington's strategy. It returned to the theme of jobs and economic growth that had been the crucial third dimension of Washington's mayoral campaign, along with governmental and political reform. It also highlighted Washington's commitment to the city's neighborhoods. That always implied more than a geographical contrast with the downtown emphasis of past mayors: it was a local code for saying that the administration would serve the poor and unemployed, blue- and white-collar workers and small businesses more than the monied establishment and that community groups would play a greater role in running the city.

This particular site carried additional symbolic weight. It was at the corner of 61st and Western Avenues on the city's southwest side. In recent years Western has become the new residential dividing line between blacks and whites in that area. Washington got virtually no votes west of Western, and paranoia about blacks moving across the avenue is common.

A local development corporation wanted to clear and prepare the site for a new grocery/drug store complex. That new business growth would, they believed, encourage Sears Roebuck, which had a small, old store across the street, to enlarge its building rather than abandon it. In turn, preservation of that "anchor" would prop up dozens of small merchants along the shopping strip.

But the project was being stymied by bureaucratic obstacles from the Jane Byrne administration. Shortly after Washington took office, he quickly authorized sale of a city ward services yard and allowed a parking lot to be built over a city alley and sewers. His administration got an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) to help finance the project; it was the first time in Chicago that a neighborhood group initiated a UDAG economic development project. Also, instead of keeping much-needed money left over from an earlier project, the city gave the money to the local group for continued development.

In any other city it would not have been a dramatic or innovative move. But it was for Chicago. It will boost the local economy and stabilize the neighborhood. It indicates what the city can do. At a time when federal community development grants and other economic revitalization funds are being cut, the Washington administration is emphasizing plan-

ning, coordination, stimulation of greater private investment with every public expenditure, and streamlined administration as ways of spurring growth.

On the same day Washington announced plans for housing rehabilitation and other "Chicago Works Together" initiatives at an abandoned apartment building on the black west side that was owned and being rehabilitated by a community group using city and private funds. "These illustrate the kind of things we'll be doing more of and show this is a city-wide effort," mayoral spokesman Chris Chandler said.

The city needs it. Between 1972-81 Chicago suffered a net loss of 123,500 jobs as well as roughly 6,000 housing units a year (although Washington claims that in his first year in office the loss of housing was actually reversed). Although the downtown prospers with growth of finance, administrative and service jobs, manufacturing and transportation jobs—often the best-paying prospects for low-skill workers—plummeted by more than 25 percent. Outlying neighborhoods—especially those undergoing or bordering racial change from white to black—suffered the greatest losses, as much as 40 percent.

With projections that Chicago will be roughly one-third white, 37 percent black and 30 percent Hispanic by the year 2010, the preservation of easily accessible, low-skill jobs is crucial to moderate what will in any case be a growing demand for social services. Although Washington is philosophically inclined to increase such aid (food and shelter for the homeless, for example, were sharply increased this past year), the city's financial standing has already slipped in large part because of bond rating agencies' forecast of long-term economic slippage.

**Redirecting racial tensions.**

The need for economic development aid is obviously greatest in black and Hispanic areas, but politics—as well as successful economic development strategy—demands that white areas not be neglected. This past weekend two neighborhood federations from the northwest and southwest sides held a "save our neighborhoods, save our city" rally. They had circulated a white-ethnic manifesto attacking Washington in strident, racial terms. But the tactic may have backfired. It upset numerous local priests who had worked with the groups. Cardinal Bernardin's human relations representative, Msgr. John Egan, intervened, deploring the "tone of violence" and the unsubstantiated "name-calling and vituperation" in their manifesto and urging priests to dissociate themselves.

Organizers of the community groups involved, always loners but now even more isolated from other community organizations, claimed that years ago they were trying to redirect racial hatred toward economic issues, such as redlining. That has changed. "Just in the last year they've been going right over the edge with rhetoric," Egan said.

Although Washington has delivered on most of their earlier list of demands—including tougher action against real estate panic-peddling, economic development, and construction of a new library—they are obsessed with opposition to court-ordered and court-administered scattered site public housing. Previous administrations had fought and delayed the order. Washington had his Chicago Housing Authority comply with the law but would

not personally intervene in site selection. Although the CHA chose sites poorly and Washington's appointee as director botched his job (and has since been eased out of most responsibilities), it was a no-win situation for any mayor.

The racial divisions in the City Council and rhetoric from both black and white political actors has maintained much of the polarization that wracked the city during the mayoral campaign. Washington chose to deal with the problem quietly, making nearly weekly but low-profile visits to meetings, picnics and other affairs in the white ethnic areas. But without any grand gestures of reconciliation, the "Council Wars" headlines overwhelmed any quiet efforts. Washington's clearest public appeals were to blacks, and his coalition narrowed.

Occasionally the reform message got through. Last week Mayme Boggetto, 50, was leaving a community meeting with Washington on the all-white northwest side. "I think he's heading in the right direction, don't you?" she asked. "It's not a racial thing, but the guys who've been making the money are angry they're not any more." But a neighbor of hers was unconvinced: "The mayor is gallant with words, but it's all doubletalk."

Such skepticism is common among whites. Even along the north lakefront, home of many young liberal whites, the mayor's support has waned. Partly they're tired of the Council bickering, partly they've received little mayoral attention. (Also, the mayor has relied excessively on one diligent, loyal white organizer, Slim Coleman, who does not work well with other white, liberal and left groups).

"They feel rightly or wrongly—and I think wrongly—that he has crossed them off," Egan said of the strident white ethnic community groups. "I don't think the facts sustain it. He's been on the southwest and northwest side. But he has to be more visible, and he has to listen to their concerns."

Washington appears to have decided to be more visible and to reduce the rhetori-

**Washington's support has waned among many northside liberal whites. Partly, they're tired of the Council bickering, partly they've received little attention from the mayor.**

cal confrontation with Vrdolyak. His drive to oust "Fast Eddie" as party chairman failed when allies of State's Attorney Richard M. Daley refused to cooperate with Washington's expanded bloc of reform-minded party committee members. Although a group of black community and political leaders are now launching a third-party effort for the fall that will be aimed at Daley and other local machine-backed white candidates, Washington currently is keeping his distance from both it and Daley.

The mayor's economic development strategy may permit him to transcend the divisiveness of the past year by moving, in Jesse Jackson's phrase, from racial battleground to economic common ground. His emphasis is on neighborhoods (which includes the varied light manufacturing that has given Chicago some stability while major industries like meatpacking and steel declined) and on jobs as the criterion of public involvement (as opposed to real estate values).

The opposition will continue, but it may be confounded. "The fight will simmer down," Washington said at the northwest side "town meeting" last week, "but it will continue because there are legitimate political differences." Although it should not be personal and is not racial, he said, "this is a question of two philosophies of government," his reform system of merit appointments, competitive bidding, open access to government and affirmative action as opposed to the old machine-style cronyism.

Already the council killed a proposed film studio and tried to end negotiations with the Rouse Corporation (developers of Boston's Faneuil Hall and Baltimore's Harborplace) about development of the city's abandoned Navy Pier on Lake Michigan. Ironically, the Council's Navy Pier action hurt the putative constituents of the Vrdolyak 29. Under the new director of economic development, Robert Mier, when the city negotiates with developers for major central city projects that require public cooperation, it also asks them to assist neighborhood developments with technical assistance, cooperation that could aid in financing, or full-scale undertaking some projects. With city encouragement, Rouse has been interested in pursuing a variant of the "ethnic village" shopping strip long sought by Washington's enemies on the southwest side.

When Washington began announcing "Chicago Works Together," Vrdolyak's ally, Ald. Ed Burke, finance committee chairman, attacked such "linkage" and worried that the Loop might be neglected. It was a typical knee-jerk response of the machine faction: Washington proposes, the oppose. But Washington's strategy is likely to be as politically popular as it is economically rational.

State Sen. Frank Savickas, a committeeman allied to Vrdolyak whom Washington recently tried to oust, was present at the 61st and Western site. "I commend the mayor," he said afterward. "I don't think all of the money should go to the downtown area. It will take more than this [to make neighborhood residents Washington supporters], but it shows that many of the fears of the white community that his comments are directed only to the black community are not justified." Savickas even shared the Washington administration criticism of the "ethnic village," which had been designed for white ethnic stores only. Many of the business owners in the area already are Hispanics, Arabs and blacks and so are the customers for a wide range of stores.

"If this is the trend and we can count on more projects like this, it should have a real impact" on views of Washington, said James Capraro, head of the local development agency. "The chairman of the local chamber of commerce was very impressed. I think he was surprised he was impressed. It was done right, above board, and there was access and interest."

**The economic plan.**

Despite the expected obstruction from the Council, much of Washington's economic plan does not rely on their ap-

*Continued on page 8*





## IN THE WORLD

*President Marcos repeatedly refused to let his wife, Imelda, head the government party's ticket in Metro Manila.*

By A. Lin Neumann

### THE PHILIPPINES

MANILA

**O**N MAY 14, IF ALL GOES WELL the Philippines will hold its first parliamentary election since 1978. The poll exercise is seen, both in Manila and in Washington, as a crucial test for the badly battered government of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Marcos, who has ruled the country since 1965, has seen his power consistently challenged since the assassination of former senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino under questionable circumstances last August 21 while in the custody of government troops. The unprecedented public outcry after the assassination touched off a deep political and economic crisis for the long-time American ally. Flight of capital, massive street protests and nervousness among bankers and business owners have been the constant companions of Marcos since August.

Therefore, the election could not come at a better time for the Philippine strongman. The issue of whether or not to participate in the poll exercise has badly divided the regime's opponents. "Boycotters" declare the poll to be "meaningless." "Participants," on the other hand, feel that the regime must make way for a strong showing by the opposition as a nod to public sentiment in recent months.

The upshot of all this is that Marcos has room to breathe. "Open the head of most politicians and you will find not brains but ballots," said former Senator Jose Diokno, head of the boycott movement, when asked why some of his colleagues were running for the national legislature.

#### Fizzling operation?

What has been especially disheartening for the opposition is the fact that just several months ago they were tantalizingly close to unity. In January a "Call for Meaningful Elections" was issued and signed by most sectors of the opposition. By March, however, unity had dissolved. Former Senator Salvador Laurel, the chairman of UNIDO, the largest opposition political party, signed the call. But later, he said that his signing was only a "personal act," not a statement of his

# May 14 election is shot in the arm for President Marcos

party's intentions. UNIDO is running a full slate and Laurel says the election is the "last chance to avert violence."

Even the Aquino family has taken to quarreling over the exercise. Ninoy Aquino's widow, Cory, signed the call and later recanted, again in the interest of "averting violence." But Ninoy's brother, Agapito, an increasingly influential political figure, remains a staunch boycott supporter.

The boycott movement's call demanded that Marcos give up his powers to rule by decree, to suspend the legislature and to arrest political opponents without due process. Those reforms, supporters argue, would make an election a worthwhile exercise. Without them, the legislature remains essentially a rubber-

## The issue of whether or not to participate in the election has badly divided Marcos' opponents.

stamp body easily overridden by the executive branch.

But all has not been rosy for the ruling party, the New Society Movement (KBL). The prospect of competing for a slot in the 183-candidate field led to a period of unseemly and divisive jockeying for the presidential nod. Even the controversial and free-spending First Lady, Imelda Marcos, fell victim to the political winds. Not wanting to give the opposition such a juicy target, Marcos reportedly refused to let his wife head the KBL ticket in Metro Manila, where she currently reigns as governor. Following the rebuff, the ambitious Imelda Marcos went off to New York in a huff for several weeks.

But the KBL has the power at the grassroots level to influence the final count. In the weeks preceding the election, government representatives were busy distributing bags of cement and fistfuls of pesos to political allies at the village level. Such "local development assistance" greases the wheels for the government candidates while reminding the local villagers just who controls the pocketbook.

#### Lukewarm clean-up.

The lone significant opposition demand that Marcos agreed to was also marred by several inconsistencies. The regime held a nationwide re-registration of voters in late March and early April in order to clean up the rolls. It was a lukewarm attempt at best. Jose Concepcion, a powerful businessman and head of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), a non-gov-

ernmental poll-watching body, said after observing the registration process, "It was bad. Very bad. I have never seen such blatant anomalies—such cheating." Concepcion cited instances of individual voters being registered in several precincts as well as being paid off and strong-armed by local government officials.

But squeaky clean or not, the election will proceed and the government must make an effort to have the process appear fair. The U.S. State Department released recently a letter from President Reagan to Marcos in which the emphasis was placed on "steps being taken in the Philippines to encourage free and open elections."

A State Department source denied that the U.S. had any direct role in influencing the elections but did concede that Washington would watch the results very carefully. "Of course we want these elections to be credible," he told *In These Times*.

Credibility will, in all likelihood, add up to about 30 percent of the legislative seats going to the opposition. That would be enough to encourage lively debate in the forum but not enough to significantly erode Marcos' power. Most officials in the Philippines say that Marcos is prepared to accept a 30 percent showing by the opposition.

The elections will solve little, however. An International Monetary Fund austerity program for the country will probably be announced in June and will include severe belt-tightening measures for the debt-strapped and nearly bankrupt Philippine economy. The prospect of widespread hunger and unemployment, therefore, hangs over the process. Also, the ongoing investigation into the Aquino assassination is reportedly close to finding the military responsible for the shooting. A growing Communist-inspired insurgency in the countryside is holding sway over wide swatches of the impoverished countryside, while left forces have moved into a position of some influence in the boycott movement.

As in El Salvador, the deeper fissures in the society are not addressed by elections. May 14 is a pause, a carnival, a set-back for the regime's opponents. But it will take more than rearranging the deck chairs to set the Philippines on the right course.

A. Lin Neumann reports from the Philippines for several U.S. publications.



# Chicago

Continued from page 6

proval. Some key elements include:

- greater coordination among all city departments;
- "first source" hiring agreements that require city-aided projects to give consideration to qualified graduates of job-training programs;
- more technical assistance and small loans to struggling small businesses as well as public "entrepreneurial equity investment;"
- a 50 percent increase in city purchases from local firms (and a 5 percent increase in private local purchases);
- a target of 25 percent of purchases from firms owned by minorities and women (increasing fairness but also building for the economy of the future city);
- city-initiated or encouraged business, such as firms to assemble buses, manufacture trash dumpsters and manufacture housing;
- planning grants to neighborhood groups to increase their ability to stimulate economic growth;
- early warning systems to detect and stop potential factory closings or housing abandonment;
- use of tax increment financing to develop the North Loop area (bonds will be repaid out of taxes resulting from the increased real estate values), an example of encouraging already strong market forces but saving scarce city dollars for areas of greatest need; and
- development of a strategic economic plan for the city, as well as initiation of

industry task forces (already started for steel and apparel) and continued promotion of particular "high tech" industries where Chicago may be competitive.

Already Washington has greatly increased capital spending on repair of bridges, sidewalks, streets and sewers. In some cases community groups competing for scarce dollars have been asked to help set priorities. Also, the administration has intensified efforts to draw private investment into housing rehabilitation and other projects, with city low-interest loans or grants making housing more affordable to the poor. After much delay, the city and Peoples Gas set up a \$15 million low-interest energy conservation loan program to be administered by community organizations. "If not for the Washington administration, neighborhood groups probably wouldn't have got the contract," argued Doug Cassell of the Chicago Energy Commission.

In general community groups have been pleased with the Washington administration's efforts to involve them and give them greater decision-making power. Besides opening up city records, the administration hopes to go farther with an "affirmative information plan" that will feed them useful data—such as landlord violations in their area—to encourage action.

But there are criticisms. Even non-racist groups were upset at how the scattered site public housing was handled. Darryl Burrows, the black president of an integrated group in the Logan Square neighborhood, was particularly upset at the failure of Washington and his aides to show up for meetings or answer their questions about past mismanagement of CHA housing. "We seem to be lumped in with the hostile northwest side," he

said. "People haven't been turned off totally, but many people who worked for him have questioned his commitment." Likewise, the Chicago 1992 Committee strongly criticized the mayor for what it saw as abandonment of democratic involvement of neighborhoods in planning for the 1992 World's Fair.

So far most business groups and leaders have been mildly supportive, although some feel shut out. Local banks were upset when the city turned to a Japanese bank to issue cheaper notes for the city, and many businesses protested a proposed lease tax. Although sympathetic to some reform, most executives decry the Council conflict, although Washington describes it as little more than the give and take between executive and legislative branches or between different political parties elsewhere.

With the first round of municipal union elections scheduled for early this month, at least the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees is happy: no other union is on the ballot (except for one contest with the Service Employees). Although Washington allowed many of the old machine-connected unions, such as the Teamsters and Laborers, to be recognized as bargaining agents for workers who were formerly covered by handshake agreements, they continue to fight the elections that favor AFSCME, with support from Vrdolyak's allies.

## Slow pace.

The greatest criticism from supporters is simply that they want more action faster. Although organizational snafus in the mayor's office continue to offend powerful constituencies and delay decisions, there are varied reasons for the slowness: City Council delays of appointments, budgetary problems, difficulties in dismissing old machine executives (despite a court order exempting top positions from prohibitions against political hiring and firing), Council rejection or delay of legislation. Most Washington appointments have been strong; a few were embarrassing (a political aide dropped when old sex offenses were discovered, the CHA chief who despite good intentions worsened public-housing problems).

The health department suffers multiple traumas. The Council continually delayed hearings on the appointment of Dr. Quentin Young as president of the Board of Health as the alderman in charge tried to wangle a consultant job for a doctor friend. Young withdrew his name in protest. However, even Washington's new administrator of the department has turned out to be cautious and unimaginative, resisting implementation of a plan for storefront preventive health clinics for the poor called "Good Health Places."

With growing social problems, a

troubled local economy, limits to local increases and a budget squeeze, Washington has pushed austerity (wage freezes and a cut of more than 3,000 of the city's 42,000 employees) and rationalization (finally beginning partial automation of garbage pick-up that will cut crews from four to three and deprive machine precinct captains of their traditional trade of garbage cans for votes). Although he hopes for more progressive sources of new revenue from some variant of state or city income taxes, that is unlikely. Facing a Republican governor, traditional downstate hostility to Chicago and indifference of white machine legislators, Chicago schools, public transit and even municipal government itself have few friends.

As a municipal reformer, Washington has made significant progress in opening, reorganizing and cleaning up a closed, archaic, corrupt system. "Byrne had the whole bloody city for sale, and he's cleaned that up," said Janet Malone, president of TRUST, a local policy research group. "There's an atmosphere of honesty."

As a political reformer, Washington has broken the machine entirely within the black community and weakened it considerably in Hispanic neighborhoods. But he has not built up the budding new style reform movement among liberal whites. Although he has made efforts with some success, to win over the white ethnic areas, he has not done enough and is still suspect there. Most seriously, he has failed to pull together an effective political organization, even though he has strengthened elements of his potential coalition, including liberal unions and community groups.

Yet the key to his success and the city's future is the mission he is now emphasizing: economic development. The public entrepreneurial role will have to grow far beyond what is now envisioned. One missed opportunity was the decision to continue plans to sell cable television rights rather than operate cable as a municipal enterprise. But Washington appears ready for the city to take a leading role in guiding development with the aid of community groups rather than leaving the initiative entirely to private business.

If the program succeeds, Chicago may pull itself back from the economic brink despite the bleak forecasts, and the bitter racial competition for housing, jobs and power may be tempered. Remote though it seems now, Chicago might some day work together. Yet if Washington delivers what his constituency needs and many advisors want—more economic redistribution, greater municipal and citizen control of economic issues, expanded social services, education and other public amenities—the businesses now supportive of growth-oriented reform and efficiency may decide they no longer wish to cooperate.


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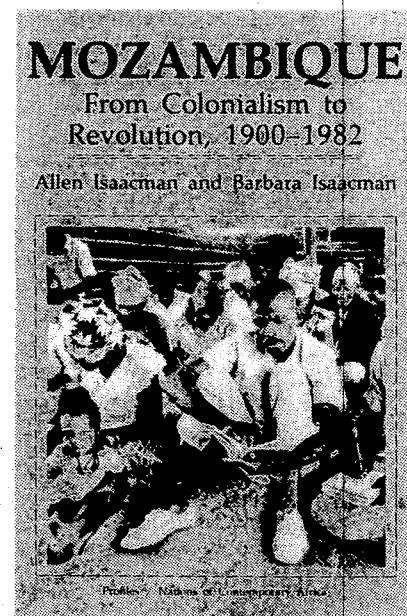
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By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**A**S IF THEY KNEW THEY were out of luck, the steelworkers of Lorraine chose Friday the thirteenth (of April) for their big demonstration in Paris protesting the Mitterrand government's new plan for the steel industry. The plan to shut down a good part of France's nationalized steel industry will wipe out about one-fourth of its remaining 90,000 jobs (compared to 150,000 in the late '60s), nearly 16,000 of them in the Eastern province of Lorraine, already hard hit from earlier shutdowns and from an ailing textile industry.

The restructuring plan presented by Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy at his March 29 cabinet meeting sent a shock wave through Lorraine. Nobody there had forgotten that in October 1981, President Francois Mitterrand, on a visit to the steel town of Longwy, promised: "The nationalization of the steel industry will be the spearhead for reconquering full employment."

Now Mitterrand was saying that for at least the past 10 years, "everyone was mistaken" about the steel industry's prospects. Last year's losses approached 10 billion francs. France's future depended on cutting back old money-losing industries in favor of "modernization" through new technologies.

Lorraine reacted in anger and despair. In Longwy, the Socialist Party office was wrecked by several hundred roaming protesters. Demonstrators blocked road and rail traffic as they had five years ago, when the last big steel mills shut down. But this time there was added bitterness and hopelessness because the blow had been dealt by a left government.

Throughout the country the plan was opposed by steelworkers and in general by the Communist-led labor confederation, the CGT. But although everyone said, "poor Lorraine," their protests were considered hopeless by most of the public.

The Socialist government's decision was largely accepted as the only logical conclusion to draw from the economic facts of life. It's impossible to go on producing steel if nobody wants to buy it. Worldwide demand for steel has been in a slump for a decade. New technologies have reduced the amount of steel needed in such products as automobiles, and Third World countries that used to absorb European production now have steel industries of their own. These are realities that cannot be ignored. But the Socialist government's plan is not as purely and simply economic as it is claimed. It is also political.

In speaking of the need to "modernize" in order to make France competitive and safeguard its "independence," the government is not being totally frank. Rather, as is usual in such cases, it is stressing the side of things most likely to please the public.

CGT economists retort indignantly that some of the plants being closed are ultra-modern and productive. Employees of the Ugine-Acier complex at Fos, on the Mediterranean near Marseilles, were shocked and outraged to learn their plant was being sacrificed, since it is one of the most modern in the world and its order books were full.

The CGT also insists that there is a perfectly good potential market for expanded French steel production in France itself. The union's experts point to figures showing that France imports 40 percent of its steel, compared to 30 percent for West Germany, 15 percent for Italy and between 20 and 25 percent for Britain and the U.S. Coordination with the nationalized industries should enable French steel to recapture 10 percent of the domestic market, the CGT says. After all, isn't this what a left government was supposed to do? Isn't this why people voted it into office?

Ideologically attached to technological progress, the French Communists never dispute the need to modernize. Their argument is that modernization should be

carried even farther, to raise production, recapture part of the domestic market, expand the economy and thus create jobs. This was the direction advocated by left Socialist Jean-Pierre Chevenement when he was minister of industry. The approach is now stigmatized as "Albanian," meaning a closed, autarkic economy.

### The ties that bind.

Although Mitterrand and his ministers continue to talk of national "independence" and "growth," their policies of the last year are based on the assumption that the French economy is not independent, and that growth is not possible in France alone. The latest cutbacks in the French steel industry are simply the execution of decisions taken by the Europe-

subsidized. That month, the U.S. and the EEC reached a three-year agreement setting quotas on European steel exports to the U.S. During those three years, the Europeans are committed to getting rid of steel industry subsidies or face strong retaliatory U.S. measures when the agreement runs out at the end of 1985.

Thus the French government cutbacks are dictated by the fact that European Coal and Steel Community subsidies will cease in January 1986. Any French government would have found itself obliged to do the same.

What then is particularly "socialist" or "left" about the Mitterrand government's industrial policy? From the viewpoint of laid-off American steelworkers, a clear and easy answer could be the financial cushions provided for the laid-

majority was now the same as the sociological majority. But the sociological majority is being "restructured."

Many left-wing intellectuals are still happy with the government because their friends are in it, and because they are invited to prestigious colloquiums and offered posts or privileges in the cultural apparatus. There they can go on theorizing.

But *socialism* in its original inspirational meaning, as a working-class movement to change society, is quite simply being liquidated in France. This would be more obvious if the organization officially promoting that movement, the French Communist Party (PCF), were not there

*On April 13 Lorraine steelworkers marched through Paris protesting the government's announced steel shut-downs.*



## LABOR

# French steelworkers fight losing battle

an Economic Community in Brussels, under heavy pressure from the U.S.

Faced with a worldwide crisis of overproduction, the EEC has for several years set steel production quotas for its member states. Rather than get drawn into a cutthroat competition that could ruin them all, the Common Market countries allow their competitiveness to be assessed and mediated by the "Eurocrats" in Brussels. The French are having to cut back steel production by 19.7 percent compared to 1980, and the British are supposed to do the same, although their plan has not yet been delivered. Belgium is having to cut back by 19.4 percent, Italy by 16.1 percent and West Germany, whose industry is judged the most efficient, by 11.3 percent. The Socialists are right in saying that their predecessors are more responsible than they are for the general state of the industry on which these quotas were based.

Some union officials claim that their industry should have been more stoutly defended against the Germans in Brussels. This overlooks the concessions made by the Germans to save part of the American market for their European colleagues. In 1982, a trans-Atlantic trade war seemed to be brewing as the American steel industry threatened action to block U.S. imports of government-subsidized European steel. The U.S. International Trade Commission ruled in October 1982 that six European nations undercut American producers by subsidizing their steel, although German steel, the largest exporter, was found to be relatively un-

off French workers: early retirement, large cash bonus payments, two years paid recycling programs. The redundant workers will not be simply dismissed and left to fend for themselves.

But that is true of all European countries, no matter what government is in office. It is the U.S. that is the exception among industrialized countries in its callous treatment of the victims of recession and technological change. From a French viewpoint, the differences between Mitterrand's and Giscard's policies are a matter of degree, and even that degree is in danger. Thus Laurent Fabius, the minister of industry, is planning to exempt industries that create jobs from social security costs. Pierre Bregovoy, the social affairs minister, objects that this measure not only may unbalance the social security budget, but it also establishes the principle that social costs are what stand in the way of job creation. This is a first principle of "Thatcherism."

Mitterrand is so enigmatic that it is hard to guess to what extent he ever really envisaged a peculiarly "socialist" solution to the economic crisis. In any case, for more than a year now his government has been clearly committed to the usual capitalist enterprising spirit to save the nation's future. Working-class needs are not perceived as a motor for development. Rather, the working class is subsidiary, in need of assistance and shrinking.

When the left came to power in 1981, Mitterrand observed that the political

participating in its own demise and resolutely pretending not to notice what is happening. In fact, Communist leaders surely know what is happening. But they plainly have no idea what to do about it.

The PCF is useful to Mitterrand so long as its presence in the cabinet makes it easier for the government to contain labor reactions against its austerity measures. Once the job is done, the Communists will be of no more use and can be thrown back to their working-class ghetto—which should be smaller and more isolated than ever. Commentators are all speculating with considerable relish on when and how this will happen.

The Communists have been trying to show—through a sterling performance on the part of their four powerless but diligent cabinet members—that they are a responsible governing party, at the same time that they show sympathy for their working-class constituents. The French Communist Party like the CGT, has called the steel plan a mistake and continued to argue for its revision. Leader Georges Marchais turned up on the edge of the April 13 Lorraine demonstration in Paris to show working-class solidarity without going so far as to protest against the government.

Socialist leaders and the media focused their attention on this act of "betrayal," conveniently relegating the plight of Lorraine people to the background. It was scarcely noticed that Mitterrand refused to receive personally a delegation from Lorraine. Instead, there was an uproar over the PCF's duplicity, and Communists were obliged to support a vote of confidence in government industrial policy. The media seems to enjoy nothing so much as the spectacle of backing the PCF up against the wall until it is squeezed to nothing.

The Communists are trapped by their past errors, by the rigidity of their practice and doctrine. Their official doctrine of "state monopoly capitalism" is wholly inadequate to analyse the current reality and locks them into the single strategy of

*Continued on the following page*



# France

*Continued from preceding page*  
seeking to share state power with the Socialists. Once out of the government, they will be left without any strategy, and also without any protection against the virulent anti-Communism that is in danger of becoming the only political consensus in a troubled and divided country. Secretly, Communist leaders are very much afraid of the open season on "Cocos" that would follow their departure from the government.

## Halfhearted endorsement.

So the Communists stay on as long as they can, halfheartedly endorsing a government whose policies are hastening the sociological decline of the industrial working class. There will still be a steel industry, and there will still be steelworkers, but everything will be more dispersed. The great industrial armies of the proletarian revolution are being broken up and scattered around the world, in batches too small to weigh very heavily in any society.

But the PCF as it is can only hope to go on commanding the loyalty of its followers through faith in the century-old belief that the industrial working class has a special historic vocation to lead in the creation of a new and better society.

Today it seems clear that the left par-

ties will pay for Lorraine's disillusionment in the 1986 legislative elections. Mitterrand has been positioning himself "above party" and may hope to survive as president to the end of his term in 1988 with a different parliamentary majority. But the right seems intent on a full comeback, without compromise.

The steel workers who marched through Paris on April 13 tried to play their old role of irresistible social force. "Mitterrand, you've had it, the workers are in the streets!" some chanted, before CGT marshals could get them back into the party line: "Mitterrand, listen to us, the workers are in the streets!" Either way, "the steelworkers in the streets" no longer seemed to be the vanguard of the people, but the rear guard of a special interest group.

They marched to the Eiffel Tower, symbol of the power of steel, of the modern world...a century ago.

A 12-year-old boy carried a sign with CFTD (French Democratic Labor Confederation) stickers and this long message on it: "Great-grandson, grandson and son of steelworkers, I don't want to grow up to be a riot policeman or a soldier."

Amid symbols of the past, this was a rare sign of attention to the future. The laid-off steelworkers will get pensions, but what about their sons? After a period as punks, will they be ready to learn a trade in the army and help police those remote areas where the rich countries extract their raw materials and their profits from more recent steel mills?

But for the most part, the protesters

were concentrating on the here and now. They wanted to protect their own jobs, their own factory in France, in Lorraine—against the workers and factories in other countries, or other regions, or even the next town, if necessary. Nobody sang the *Internationale*. ■

# Defense

*Continued from page 3*

American foreign policy, it is based on "extended deterrence and alliance," that is, on the United States' ability to maintain and defend militarily a worldwide system of alliances against the Soviet Union and its allies.

One of the more interesting sidelights in *Defining Defense* is Ravenal's discussion of "counterforce" weaponry. He rejects the view that the introduction of first-strike weapons capable of destroying Soviet missiles constituted a departure from American foreign and military policy. Counterforce, Ravenal argues, became necessary when the Soviet achievement of nuclear parity undermined the American threat to use nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union invaded Western Europe. With counterforce weapons, Ravenal argues, the U.S. can threaten a limited first strike against the Soviet Union that would destroy the advantage of further escalation without inviting a Soviet response against American cities. The production of such weapons was therefore consistent with the American commitment to defend Western Europe.

Unlike Dellums and other critics on the left, Ravenal does not base his rejection of American foreign policy on its injustice or aggressiveness, but rather on its lack of feasibility. Ravenal argues that Soviet military parity, the diffusion of power in the world, and Americans' reluctance to foot a steadily rising budget has made American policy unworkable. The U.S. is trying to control a world that no longer can be controlled. And the attempt to do so can be extremely dangerous.

Ravenal proposes replacing extended deterrence and alliance with a strategy of "war-avoidance and self-reliance." He would limit the use of the American military to defending against "military threats directed against our homeland." He would leave the rest of the world to its own defenses, even if the result is the accession of Soviet-backed regimes. Ravenal proposes that the U.S. "hedge against conditions we could not control, and protect our security by reducing vulnerabilities to the practical minimum." Doing this would entail, among other things, developing "substitutes for critical raw materials and energy."

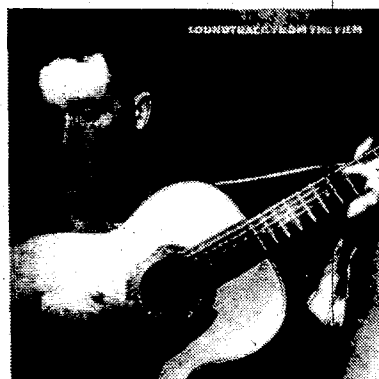
While a relentless and commendable rationality governs much of Ravenal's analysis of military strategy—his 1979 pamphlet, *NATO's Unremarked Demise*, is a classic—his basic view of the world is deeply pessimistic. It is of a world increasingly riven by conflicts like the Iran-Iraq War. His non-interventionism is, by his own admission, a variety of neo-isolationism. One might even call it survivalism.

Ravenal concludes his strategic recommendations, "Others may be tempted to measure such an anarchical world, with its liabilities, against the abstract desirability of controlling events, steering them in favorable directions. But...attempts at control, if they fail, can yield both greater implication and greater harm for the nation that has made the attempt. Whereas, if we avoid involvement, there may be disorder in the world, but we are compensated by the fact that we are not implicated in it."

Neither Kaufmann's nor Ravenal's prescriptions will be adopted by Congress this year, which in its haste to return home for the elections has no stomach for a debate on the real purposes of American military spending and strategy. Congress is likely to settle for a spending increase somewhere between the 7.8 percent the president is now supporting and the 3.5 percent supported by the House.

But the kind of issues raised by Kaufmann and, more dramatically but with less influence, by Ravenal will recur. Both Kaufmann's and Ravenal's analyses reflect the erosion of the consensus that briefly sustained the Reagan administration's military spending requests. ■

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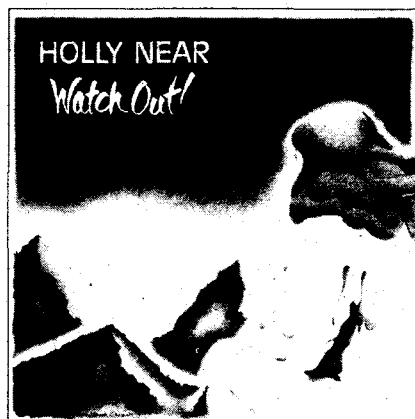
New release. The soundtrack from the new film shown on PBS TV features 14 Woody Guthrie songs sung by Arlo Guthrie, Hoyt Axton, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Ronnie Gilbert, Holly Near, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie.



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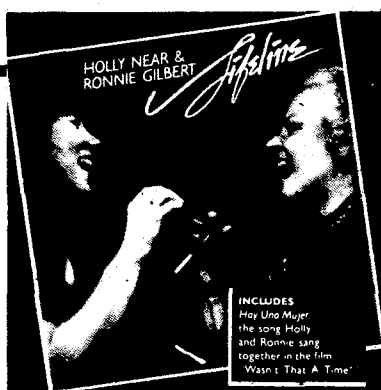
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By Fred Halliday

A D E N

**R**ETURNING TO THE CAPITAL of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) after a seven-year absence, much strikes the observer as different from before. The streets bear out the World Bank's claim that per capita income has risen by an average of 7 percent annually in the same number of years.

Now there are lines of Toyotas where before only aged British models of the colonial era ran, the people appear to be better dressed, the houses are more plentiful and better maintained, and there are a greater variety and quantity of goods in the shops. Above all, people seem more relaxed, less harassed by both the economic privations the country has been through since independence in 1967 and the sense of siege induced by the PDRY's tense relations with its three Arabian neighbors—North Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Oman.

There are several reasons for this upturn. One is money. The government in Aden has encouraged Yemeni migrants abroad to send home remittances and has, since 1980, eased up on the conditions under which their citizens can go abroad to work. The result is that the 210,000 Yemenis estimated to be working abroad—equivalent to about a third of the labor force—send home more than \$200 million a year. Part of this goes to finance imports of consumer goods and part is channeled into social development projects, often in the areas from which the migrants themselves come.

The PDRY has, despite its commitment to state control of the economy and a policy of "scientific socialism," learned from the mistakes of other Third World revolutionary states that broke their links to the world market and its banking institutions without finding any alternative sources of income and finance.

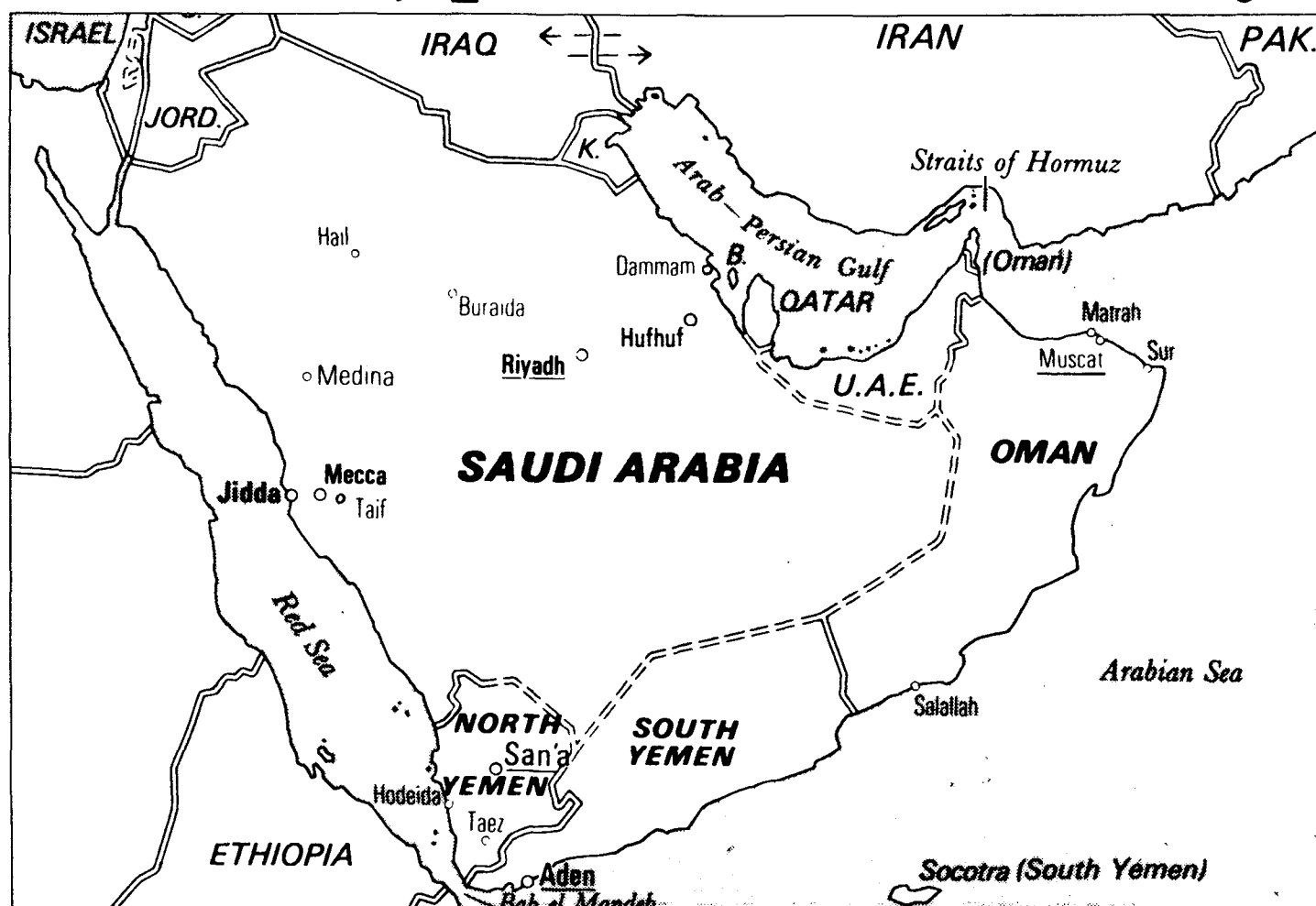
The Soviet Union and China have both promised some aid, but they have also made it clear that the PDRY must find the bulk of its capital, and its foreign exchange earnings, elsewhere. Thus total committed aid at the beginning of 1981 included \$573 million from Russia and \$126 million from China, but the rest of the \$1,241 million total came from Arab and multilateral sources. Moreover, the Russians have only actually spent around \$160 million of that total, and there have been many complaints as to its quality and the slowness in delivery of promised equipment.

At the same time, the PDRY has loosened up the tight government controls imposed in the first phase of independence. The private trading sector, denounced as the parasitic "petty bourgeoisie" in the early '70s, has been given greater leeway. Economic experts trained from universities as far afield as Pyong-

**President Ali Nasser has broadened his country's economic and political contacts without rejecting its bonds with the USSR.**

# MIDDLE EAST

## South Yemen seeks economic alliances, political neutrality



yang and Harvard have been given a greater say in running the economy, and the political cadres who led the guerrilla movement against the British listen much more to their advice. While contacts of a social kind between Yemenis and foreigners, including other Arabs, are still discouraged, the absolute restriction of such interactions—imposed in 1975 to hinder the influence of Saudi and Iraqi diplomats—has decreased.

Much of the credit for these changes goes to the President Ali Nasser Mohammad, a former guerrilla leader and minister of defense, who became head of state in 1980 in place of Abdul Fatah Ismail, an impractical theoretician who believed that the Soviets would solve all of South Yemen's problems. Ali Nasser has not, as some western observers had hoped, done what Sadat of Egypt and Siad Barre of Somalia did—namely expel the Soviet military personnel from his country or renounce the foreign policy ties which Aden has developed with Moscow. But the PDRY never gave the Soviet Union the kinds of base facilities that Egypt and Somalia did, and what Ali Nasser has done is to broaden his country's economic and political contacts without rejecting the bonds with the USSR.

### Toward normalization.

The PDRY has been able to resolve some problems that in the early '70s put it at odds with its neighbors. The South fought two wars with North Yemen in 1972 and 1979, and both countries supported guerrilla actions by dissidents within the other.

But since the 1979 war a slow process of normalization has occurred. Both states now talk of "unity." But a full unification of the two appears to be a remote possibility, despite the fact that a joint constitution has been drawn up. What unity means in practice is that the two seek to avoid war, that they find areas of economic and cultural cooperation and that they assert a common Yemeni nationalism against other states, particularly Saudi Arabia, who are believed to be encroaching upon their independence.

The PDRY was also involved in supporting the guerrilla opposition in the Sultanate of Oman, and even after the revolt was crushed in 1975 relations between the two countries were tense. In

1982, however, as a result of mediation by Kuwait, the two states agreed to diplomatic recognition and an end to polemics. So far ambassadors have not been exchanged, and the South Yemenis are openly critical of the extent to which Oman has given military facilities to the United States' Central Command, or Rapid Deployment Force.

Also, relations with Saudi Arabia are diplomatically correct, but cold: the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1976 was soon followed by the crisis in the Horn of Africa, in which the two countries took opposing sides, and in 1978, after South Yemen was accused of assassinating the President of North Yemen, the Saudis tried to force Aden out of the Arab League. A Saudi ambassador has finally returned to Aden, but the Saudis are not providing economic aid, and they remain wary of this intransigent republic regime on the southwest corner of the peninsula they regard as their domain.

Where the PDRY has tried to develop new ties is with other revolutionary states of the Third World, particularly Cuba and Ethiopia. The militia, local defense committees and literacy campaigns of South Yemen have all been modeled on those of Cuba, and hundreds of South Yemen children are studying on the Island of Youth in Cuba. Cuban advice on how to avoid the isolation and blockade they face has been well received in Aden. The Ethiopian revolution, an hour's flying time across the Red Sea, has given Aden its first revolutionary ally in the region, and South Yemen forces fought and died in the 1977-78 war between Ethiopia and Somalia. In gratitude, Ethiopia recently lent the PDRY 6,000 hectares of its territory to produce food that arid South Yemen cannot supply itself.

Relations with the west continue to be politically cool, and there is no interest in re-establishing relations with the U.S. that were broken off in 1969. "They would only start spying and making trouble," commented one Yemen diplomat.

But the majority of the PDRY's trade is with Western Europe and Japan, and the percentage of imports from Britain—around 15 percent—is the same as it was under colonial rule. South Yemen may soon become a more attractive economic partner since, after years of fruitless search, it has now found oil in commer-

cial quantities.

Where South Yemen sees the greatest problems are in tensions brought on by the politics of the region. Aden has tried to encourage reconciliation among different factions of the PLO and has emerged, with Algeria, as the focus for such a reunification effort. As a result, South Yemen has earned the enmity of Libya, which has abruptly terminated its economic aid and left several building projects in Aden half-finished.

The PDRY has also refused to take sides in the conflict between Libya and Sudan and has urged a peaceful settlement of the crisis there. It is equally restrained on the Iran-Iraq war. Although it has diplomatic relations with both states and is processing Iranian oil in its Aden refinery, South Yemeni criticism of Iran's continuation of the war is harsh. Just as they saw the conflicts in which they were earlier involved as encouraging outside—i.e. American—involvement in the region, they now want to play what part they can in diminishing regional tensions. But South Yemen's diplomatic influence is limited, and Aden has a wary view of what the future may hold in west Asia.

*Fred Halliday's latest book is The Making of the Second Cold War.*

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# Indians fight

By Mark Felt

National Archives

**I**T WAS COLD IN SOUTH DAKOTA this winter, down to 40 below a few months ago. Up past Manderson, in the western part of the state where the road heads north into Rapid City, all the highways were slick with ice and snow.

It was worse on the Pine Ridge, Standing Rock, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Indian Reservations, where the back roads were particularly treacherous and where Lakota (Sioux) Indians live. In February, the danger that Lakotas would be starving in the isolation of the reservations tinged the voice of Tribal Chairman Joe American Horse with fear and frustration.

"It's getting real rough right now," he said. "We have to take food into some places, and there are others we just can't get to. It wouldn't be so bad if we could find some money, but there's no money here."

Ironically, 11 years after the takeover of the village of Wounded Knee (where over 300 Lakota-Sioux were massacred in 1890), it is precisely those circumstances beyond human control that have become the biggest threat to the integrity of the Indians and to the de-facto leadership of Native Americans by American Indian Movement (AIM) activists. The dilemma for AIM's leaders—people like Russell and Ted Means, Clyde and Vernon Bellecourt—is that just as the fight for Indian nationhood cannot survive mass indifference, neither can it be realized by a Wounded Knee III or IV or V.

Right now, it is simple deprivation (a term Jonathan Schell coined in the *New Yorker*—but he might have called it violent uninterest) that is pushing AIM and its supporters to a confrontation that they do not want and cannot win.

For Russell Means, it's starting to look a lot like the '60s. "When they [the U.S. government] were out there egging for a confrontation, everyone was interested," Means says. "Everyone said, 'Hey, here I'll help,' you know. But we're not chic now, we're just Indians. We can only help ourselves."

The '60s and early '70s, AIM leaders will now tell you, might have been the worst thing that happened to their move-

ment, or to Indians. It seemed as if big changes were in store for most Indians who were living on reservations at the time. The creation of a system of non-Indian support groups that sprung up throughout the late '60s and early '70s led to a growing feeling among whites that Indians deserved a better shake. It was the age of *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*, and it was hip to wear headbands.

At first, Indians felt pleased by this white concern. Then the era of confrontation ended with Wounded Knee in 1972, and the support groups—with some notable exceptions—melted away. The high expectations that AIM had brought were replaced by bitterness and the realization that AIM's leaders may have overestimated what could be accomplished. But the notion that the FBI "destroyed" AIM seems exaggerated. The organization retrenched and waited.

"You want to see it happen again?" one Cheyenne man asked. "Just bring in the 82nd Airborne—land them right in the middle of the reservation."

It's an odd kind of logic—that confrontation doesn't destroy but builds (and built AIM), while lack of interest (another kind of confrontation, an "indirect genocide," according to one Ojibwa Indian) can destroy the only base the Indians have: their land. In the '60s rampant unemployment, alcoholism and the breakdown of tribal values forced younger Indians off the reservation and into the cities. Indian leaders now argue that U.S. policy was meant to lead to assimilation. The American Indian would disappear in the great American ghetto, diluted in the cultural soup of the nation.

It almost worked.

"Indians were outsiders in the cities," Birgil Kills Straight, an expert in Indian history and Indian education, says. "What happened is that Indians were radicalized in the city—they didn't really believe in white values but were never taught any Indian values. You know, it was against the law to speak Lakota in reservation schools—I had a ruler broken over my head when I was six for speaking Lakota. So these urban Indians started coming back to the reservation. And they

started AIM."

In essence, the late '60s and early '70s saw a revival of the dormant contest that has always plagued Indian/white relations, a kind of political whipsaw. It was as if the government couldn't decide which policy to follow. Should it encourage assimilation by forcing Indians off the reservation, leading to the formation of groups like AIM? Or should it foster confrontation over sovereignty on the reservations, increasing the credibility of Indian activists? Since the government's confrontational policy of the early '70s didn't work, it has revived the discarded and debunked assimilationist policy of the '60s.

## Trouble brews on reservations.

All through the Pine Ridge and its sister reservations (Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, the Rosebud) and in other places where AIM has put down roots (they are strongest in the northern plains, weakest on the Navajo and Hopi reservations in Arizona), the assimilationist policy is being fought.

Perhaps the clearest example of this was the refusal of the seven Lakota-Sioux tribes to accept a 1980 Supreme Court decision ordering the U.S. government to pay for confiscated land that the Lakota-Sioux and Cheyenne (mostly in Wyoming) have clear title to under the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. While the Court's decision is a tacit admission that the Treaty still stands and that non-Indian ownership of the land (much of it National Park) is illegal, acceptance of the payment would have extinguished all claims the Indians have to the land.

Under the Supreme Court decision the Lakota-Sioux tribes would receive \$105 million for their claim to the Black Hills, though the land (rich in uranium and gold) was worth about \$1 billion in 1877, the year the Congress "confiscated" almost all of the Great Sioux Reservation. After that the Homestake Mining Company, part of the Hearst family holdings, moved in.

"A private corporation amassed a multi-billion dollar empire while the nations were forced to starve," Anita Parlow, a Washington-based lawyer with the

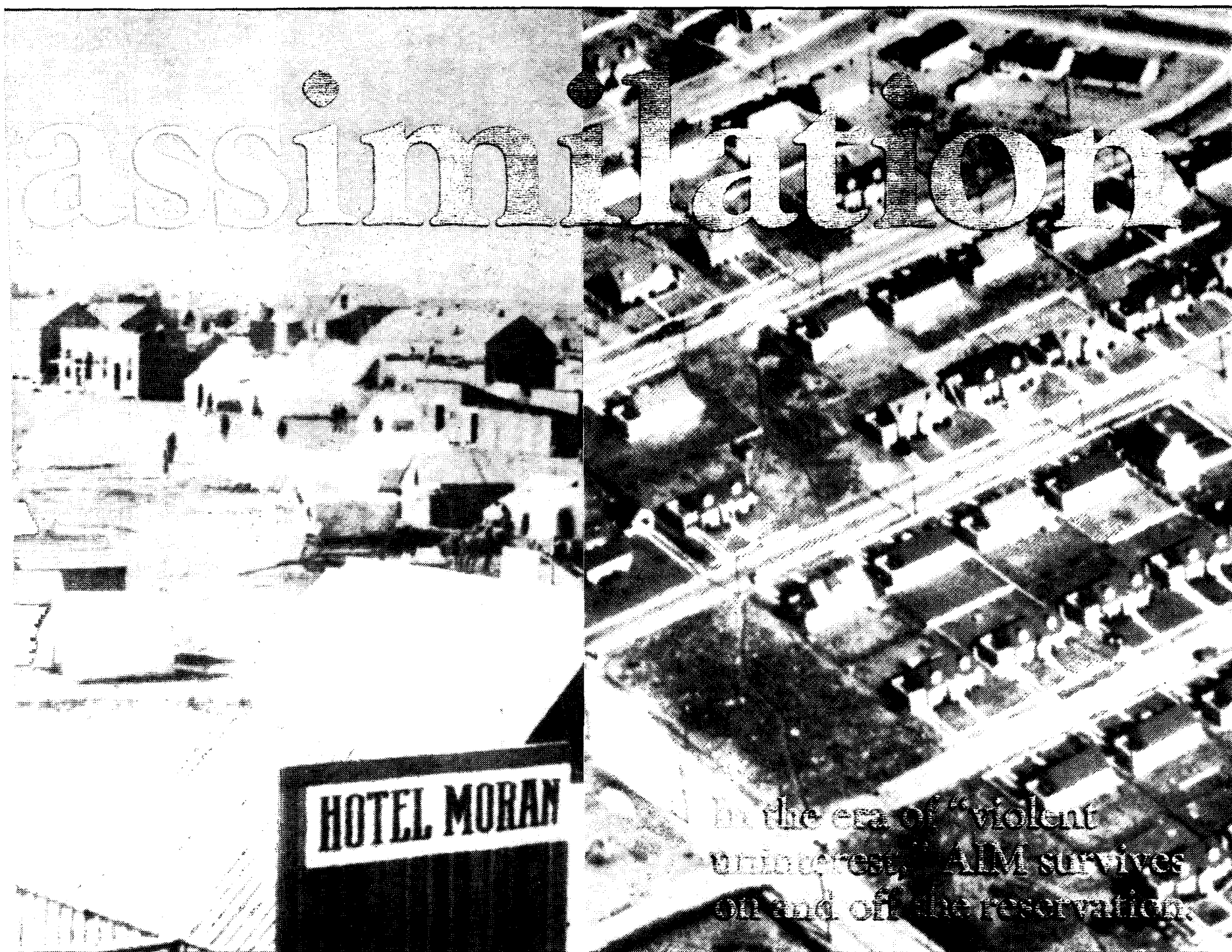
Oglala/Lakota Legal Rights Fund, said in 1983.

The contested land is holy to both Lakota-Sioux and Cheyenne, and is integral part of their religion. This why, in 1981, a group of Lakota-Sioux activists set up Yellow Thunder Camp government land in the Black Hills southeast of Rapid City. The camp was a response to programs run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which AIM leaders contended had failed disastrously because their goal was "total" assimilation. An illegal occupation, Yellow Thunder Camp (named after a young Indian killed in a racial incident) was the subject of much government concern in 1981. South Dakota and federal government officials claimed, in a fit of near hysteria, that the "camp"

## Meanwhile Dennis Banks waits in N.Y.

New York Governor Mario Cuomo has promised not to send troops, and the FBI said it would not arrest him on Indian charges while he is in New York. At the time being Dennis Banks, 53-year-old American Indian, has been in Onandaga, a 7,300-acre reservation in upstate New York for a year and a half. Until Onandaga tribal elders for to talk to the press. In a telephone interview in mid-March, who hosts a late-night show on WBAI Radio in New York. From his house in Onandaga, 100 miles from Syracuse, Banks wants to be able to fight for that Indian people face in New York. I'm not about to surrender my struggle or my principles to the whims of racism in South Dakota since 1975, when I was indicted for inciting to riot. In 1980, 20 Indians indicted for the Custer, South Dakota, massacre.





didn't have camping permits and so couldn't stay on the land. The fact that Yellow Thunder Camp is still in place after one of the coldest winters on record, shows AIM leaders that Indians can survive as a separate people, if only they can achieve nationhood.

The South Dakota state government has hardly supported Yellow Thunder, denying repeated requests that tourists be prohibited from interrupting Indian religious ceremonies. In fact, Indian leaders claim South Dakota would like to make Yellow Thunder into a tourist spot—just as they did to Mt. Rushmore, sacred ground for the Sioux.

The fact that Yellow Thunder has survived, even thrived, serves as testimony that Native Americans will not disavow their heritage. From his office on the

reservation in February, Russell Means said, "They're warm down in Yellow Thunder, and we're freezing our asses off up here in this concentration camp."

But the tribe's refusal to accept the Supreme Court monetary award and Yellow Thunder Camp's occupation are only symbolic victories. Oglala-Sioux lawyers have pressed their land claims, arguing that keeping Indians out of parts of the Black Hills abrogates freedom of religion (for which claim there is strong legal precedent) before the U.S. and World Courts. It seems unlikely, however, that the U.S. government or the Burger Court will ever affirm the 1868 Laramie Treaty.

Even more remote is the possibility that tribal governments will be turned over to tribal leaders, no matter how

moderate. While some tribes enjoy a semblance of autonomy and have even won land settlements based on religious arguments, the government, through the Department of the Interior, has a virtual hammerlock on all employment, health and education programs. Judging from the actions of the Reagan administration, these BIA and Interior Department programs are virtually inviolate. In 1982, the administration unceremoniously hushed James Watt for saying that "American socialism had failed the American Indian," and that the Reagan administration would like to "see them liberated." His statement was broadly interpreted to mean that the government would follow a policy terminating all claims on all Indian lands. Assimilation would be immediate and irrevocable.

But the threat was implicit: American Indians could accept their present situation (and stay on the increasingly shrinking dole) or face termination of the reservation system. The threat became real when Sen. Strom Thurmond, with the tacit approval of the Reagan administration, submitted a bill that would deny all Indian land claims in perpetuity. Forever. Under the bill, the Indian nations would not even have recourse to lawsuits for land recovery.

"The strategy is pretty simple," Anita Parlow says. "You hold out money to the Indians, who need it, for land that is theirs. When they don't take the money you threaten them with full termination—just another way of saying, 'take the money and lose your land, or don't take the money and lose your land.'"

Others characterize the strategy in starker terms. "Basically, it's a policy of starvation," one Indian leader says. Although the Interior Department officially recognizes that the unemployment problem on Indian reservations is serious, documents from the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs indicate that it is critical. According to these figures, unemployment on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota stands at 75 percent, on the Rosebud at 50 percent, at Standing Rock 79 percent and at Cheyenne River 54 percent. Nor do the figures appreciably change in other areas of the country—the Navajo's unemployment stands at 53 percent, while among Eastern tribes (Seminole, Mohawk and others), it stands at 45 percent.

"This is what Reagan is saying when he refers to pockets of poverty," Clyde Bellecourt, the current AIM president, says. "But these are not pockets of poverty. These are chasms."

For Bellecourt, who appeared at the August March on Washington and who has linked himself to Jesse Jackson's campaign for the Democratic Party nomination, the crisis facing Indians can only be solved by a systematic program of self-help and education. Bellecourt is clearly the organizational genius of AIM. His housing projects in Minneapolis

*Continued on page 22*

that took place in 1973. Rather than go to jail, where he claimed prison guards would kill him, Banks fled to California. Governor Jerry Brown granted him sanctuary and refused South Dakota's extradition request. When Brown left office at the end of 1982, Banks fled to New York. (California's new governor, George Deukmejian had made it quite clear he would be happy to turn Banks over to South Dakota authorities.) Banks has been in New York since December '82, and to the best of everyone's knowledge he hasn't left Indian land since he's been in Onandaga.

The FBI says agents are not staked out in the area waiting for Banks to step off Indian land. Special Agent Joe Skrzat, in the FBI's Albany office, refused to say how many agents were working on the Banks case. But he did say, "The FBI is not going to send agents onto the reservation to arrest Banks.... We don't want any unfortunate incidents where somebody might get hurt or killed."

But from Onandaga, Banks says, "There's absolutely no doubt that they're there.... The feds are waiting to nab me."

When asked about security arrangements, Banks said, "I don't want to say too much about security here. My real security is the people out there who are

writing letters to Governor Cuomo and the Justice Department, asking them to honor the sovereignty of Onandaga and to leave me alone."

Cuomo may sympathize with Banks. In May 1983, the governor met with Mark Banks, Dennis' younger brother and the coordinator of his national support committee. According to Mark Banks, Cuomo assured him that state police would not seize his brother and declared, "I have always maintained that Indian people are the most oppressed people in this country."

Dennis Banks thinks Cuomo has a good working relationship with the Six Nations confederacy, which includes the Onandaga.

"In essence, he honors and respects their sovereignty," says Banks. "Not many other governors in this country would be willing to do that." Banks' support committee has delivered 50,000 signatures to Cuomo urging some form of sanctuary in New York. That's just a drop in the bucket compared to the two million signatures collected and delivered to Jerry Brown while Banks was in California.

Banks offered to serve out his South Dakota prison sentence in a California prison, but South Dakota refused. He has also offered to serve time in New York. He says he would appeal his con-

viction from prison.

"I have offered to go to prison," Banks says. "So it's not like I'm trying to avoid doing time."

In Onandaga when he's not farming, Banks is running. He runs between six and eight miles a day, often accompanied by his nine-year-old daughter, Tasina. Banks is also national coordinator for the Great Jim Thorpe Longest Run, a native-American cross-country spiritual run leaving New York City on May 24. The Longest Run will pass through Onandaga on May 28 before arriving in Sacramento 51 days later. Although Banks won't participate, his daughter Tasina will.

It seems as if Dennis Banks could go on living in Onandaga indefinitely. It is the capital of the Six Nations and the seat of the oldest government in the U.S. The four or five square miles of Indian land there are inhabited by a few thousand Onandagas, who are very traditional.

But Banks is not at ease with the situation. He wants to be able to travel freely around the U.S. once again. He told a caller on the WBAI talk show that it's practically a waste of time to write President Reagan, but he does encourage letters to the Congress urging a congressional inquiry into his case.

—Jon Kalish



# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## LAPSE

THIS IS A REMINDER TO BE ON THE look-out for lapses from the inclusive language that I believe *In These Times* strives for. Rachel Gorlin's article "New Yorkers Go for the 'New' Mondale" (ITT, April 11) describes the support Jesse Jackson earned among New York's minority voters and its voters under 30, as well as among 7 percent of white voters. Then, in the last paragraph, she writes, "New Yorkers didn't hear too much about the candidates' urban policies—though Jackson repeatedly pointed out that the 'slums' were an issue—and few people seemed to notice."

A great many "people" and a great many "New Yorkers" did indeed notice; they voted accordingly.

It's well and good to avoid sexist and ethnically tainted language, but that isn't enough. In the just society of the future, terms like "people" and "New Yorker" will encompass all colors, all ages, all conditions of life. Please instruct Ms. Gorlin to start writing as if that society existed here and now.

—Karen E. Fields  
Cambridge, Mass

## ANOTHER LAPSE

ANOTHER ISSUE OF *IN THESE TIMES*. Another troubling mode of reference to black voters.

Your editorial asserts that it is "certainly true that most blacks are voting for Jackson without regard to the issues of military spending or foreign

policy" (ITT, April 18). It is not "certainly true," as you strongly imply, that black people vote their ethnicity, without thinking of what issues concern them.

Take a look back and consider the candidates "most blacks" have voted for at the national level and recall what issues were attached to those candidates. See if you can imagine an ethnic bloc in support of a black Reaganite.

Something awful has happened to your logic when you can say that blacks vote for Jackson without regard to the issues and then say that "the black community as a whole is a natural left constituency." Please reflect a bit on this contradiction.

If you do, I think you'll see an example of what must disappear from our modes of thought and talk in order to permit movement toward a more just society. You may also see that an apology is in order: No ethnic group likes to be tarred with the brush of irrationality. There will be little headway toward the black-and-white coalition you seek until discourse proceeds with mutually respectful attention.

—Karen E. Fields  
Cambridge, Mass.

## MORE SUPERWOES

I HAVE A FOOTNOTE TO ADD TO DAVID Moberg's article on supermarket union-busting (ITT, April 18). Milwaukee, Wis., grocery retailers are also scrambling to build superstores and reduce labor costs.

Many are using industrial revenue bonds (IRBs) to finance new store construction. IRBs are tax-exempt bonds that enable businesses to obtain low-interest loans subsidized by federal taxpayers. Some are using IRBs to convert from non-union, small, convenience food stores to non-union superstores.

One Cub Foods owner got a \$5.8 million IRB to build a non-union franchise store within a block of a unionized Sentry store that later closed. Then he closed his own convenience store. The owner of another non-union convenience store scared his employees into attending a city hearing to oppose a Pick'n'Save superstore IRB. The workers saw this as a way to protect their jobs.

At the hearing the owner said the area could not support any more supermarkets. But the extent of his interest in his employees was shown by his concurrent request for an IRB to build a Cub Foods franchise store in a neighboring town less than five miles away. Vigilant citizens exposed this hypocrisy, and the application was withdrawn.

A grocery store executive recently called all this "the American system." I wish we could disagree.

—Dan Willett  
Congress For a Working America  
Milwaukee, Wisc.

## REFORM

I FOUND ROBERTA MANNING'S SERIES on Soviet leaders unusually high-quality in its information.

Unfortunately, I didn't feel quite as positive about John Judis' story on Democratic Party reforms and the nominating process. Beginning by saying that Jesse Jackson has been denied delegates because of current Democratic Party rules in a most outrageous manner (which is certainly the case), Judis seems to end by saying that maybe we ought to keep what we have because the European parliamentary party system somehow wouldn't work here.

Well, perhaps it would. Why should we assume it wouldn't? In any case,

although there have certainly been undesirable aspects to the nominating process in the last eight years, I would not want to return to anything like the pre-1968 guidelines. The triumph of the anti-reform faction in the struggle over delegate selection rules for 1984 has caused serious problems for rank-and-file Democrats and has made it harder for any reform-minded people to have an impact as delegates at July's national convention. Not only is the widespread 20 percent threshold rule undemocratic, but the way in which appointed delegate blocs have returned to haunt us (and, likely, Walter Mondale) will only hurt our chances of unseating Reagan in November.

I find it outrageous that voters in Iowa and New Hampshire—and the media—decided who would be on the ballot in the May 8 Ohio primary. I also feel that open media time, totally dependent on campaign finances, has distorted the nominating process by appealing to the lowest common denominator, not by paying any intelligent attention to issues.

Someday, I hope we will have logical party alignments in this country, whether or not we keep the two-party system. In the meantime, however, we need 1) a national primary instead of 50 primaries and caucuses, 2) public financing of campaigns and a prohibition on media ads—but adequate and equal time in the media for all candidates to properly air their views before the voters. Then Democrats really might nominate a candidate intelligently. We might even get it by proportional delegate selection, for a change.

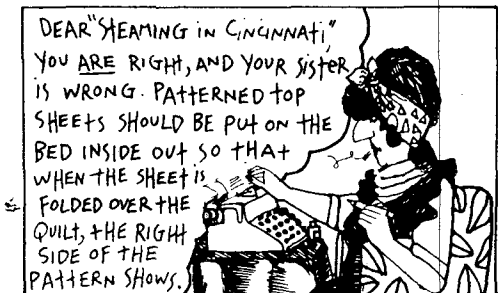
—Mim Jackson  
1984 coordinator, delegate selection,  
Alan Cranston, Ohio, Ohio Freeze Voter  
Kent, Ohio

## CORRECTION

In the "Inside Story" on labor law in last week's edition, the number of workers effected by Otis Elevator's relocation decision was incorrect. The correct number is 17.

## SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



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Edward Asner

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By Michael Urban

**R**OBERTA MANNING IS right in pointing out that the American media do a poor job of informing us about the USSR (*ITT* April 4 and 11). Yet the charge that she lays—that the media err in describing the Soviet Union as “stagnant,” “aging” or “immobile”—is refuted by the very press criticisms and economic reforms in the Soviet Union that she offers as evidence of dynamism. The Soviet leadership itself seems concerned about stagnation. What other reason for the press criticisms or the reforms? The answer to the question “stagnant or dynamic?” would then depend

works of particular exchange will tend to be resisted by all the particulars.

This tendency toward preservation of the system has been referred to by some American political scientists as the Soviet “social contract.” Its provisions are fairly simple: all recognize the right of all to participate in the system of what I’m calling particularistic exchange in networks; the right to participate is grounded in the guarantee of minimum security to all would-be participants, meaning employment, food, housing, etc. for all. Political terror, a generalized insecurity, has no place within the “social contract” but limited repression against “anti-socialist” elements obviously does. It removes those who might threaten the “social contract” itself (dissidents, nationalist

work depressed when there are few or shoddy consumer goods available (a situation reflected in the fact that personal savings in the USSR amount to three-quarters of the national income today), but hundreds of millions of manhours are lost to production each week due to the time spent queuing for what is available.

What, then, have 27 years worth of housing decrees accomplished? They have made the imbalances worse. Strong ministries (sector A) have dumped their dilapidated and out-of-repair housing on local governments and have retained, and

Perhaps the head of the construction firm has a friend in the Party hierarchy. Perhaps this Party official can do a favor for the firm producing the materials which will induce the firm to honor its contract. (Let’s say the Party official promises to use his influence to see to it that the firm is exempted from the decrees which order it to transfer its housing to the local government.) Perhaps a bribe in cash or kind will suffice. The point is that those in sector A are “strong” precisely because others depend on them for what they need and this dependency can be parlayed into enlarged advantage.

### Control from below?

Manning’s remarks about a second feature of decentralization, a certain democratization among ordinary workers and rank and file Communists, seem to speak of control from below that might restrain such advantage-seeking on the part of officials. The illustration of engineers and workers “who refused to follow outmoded or unsuitable construction plans drawn up in Moscow” and, accordingly, laid down their tools for months is open to a dozen interpretations. Hers seems to be that conscientious workers at the base are striking a blow at the incompetent bureaucrats. If she is right, this shows that the hierarchical order is so weak in implementing its instructions that resistance is possible and that, in some cases, resistance springs from noble motives. But can we suppose that in cases involving resistance out of less salubrious motives the hierarchical order regains its strength and overcomes the resistance?

A similar point might be made regarding the role of trade unions and their protection of workers’ rights. They may also exchange with management, selling out the workers in question for some favor (let’s say somebody’s son gets a promotion). In attempting to demonstrate her argument about unions via reference to the high percentages of dismissed workers being reinstated by courts, Manning appears to be reading content familiar in a capitalist country into the Soviet context. Unions defend workers. Unions take cases of unfair dismissal to court. Unions win back jobs for the majority of dismissed employees. The problem with such a reading is that none of this content belongs to the Soviet context. No workers under Soviet law can be dismissed over the objection of the union. This is part of the “social contract.” The fact that a worker wins back his job in court means that the union didn’t defend him, the court did. The courts act to enforce the social contract *against* the unions, when unions fail.

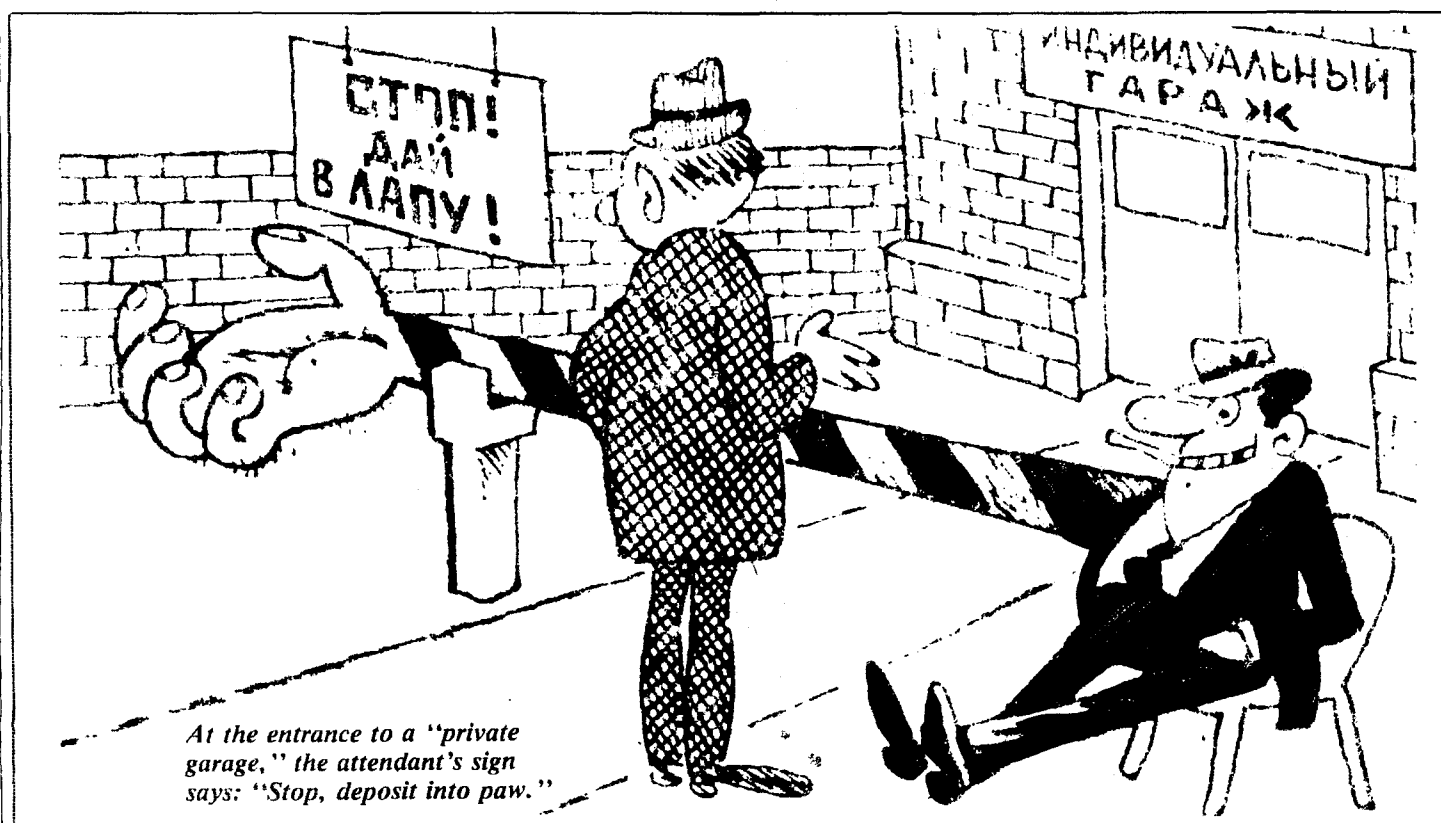
Manning’s discussion of a growing intra-Party democracy suggests another form of rank-and-file restraint on officials. If Party elections worked as she describes them, if the *nomenklatura* system amounted to no more than a veto for the central Party organs, she would be right. But the facts are otherwise. The Party indeed plays the leading role in the Soviet system because it has the power of appointment to all positions of importance. It controls thereby access to access. That is the *nomenklatura* system, and there is no evidence suggesting that the Party is prepared to abandon the *nomenklatura* system or its leading role in society.

Since Stalin, the Soviet system has likely legislated more reforms than any other country on earth. It remains remarkably unchanged. Interviews conducted by me, and by many others, with Soviet officials, as well as surveys with officials who have emigrated, point up repeatedly one salient fact: those at whom the reforms are aimed pay little attention to them, to the point that in some cases the officials are entirely ignorant of the reforms themselves. Their attention seems to be elsewhere. Most likely, on the complex networks of exchange in which they are all imbedded. Their minds, that is, are on the system. ■

Michael E. Urban teaches Soviet politics at Auburn University, Alabama.

## PERSPECTIVES

# Is it Soviet ritual or reform?



At the entrance to a “private garage,” the attendant’s sign says: “Stop, deposit into paw.”

on whether the criticisms and reforms amount to anything. Is something new being born or are we seeing another replay of ritual reformism? My vote goes to the latter.

I agree with Manning’s assessment of Western media coverage. The perspective of our mass media is generally that of the one-man show. The Soviet “leader” is supposed to have “the power.” He can use it to make everyone hop. He may, however, become old and tired like Brezhnev. (Not much hopping then.) Yet a “new leader,” such as Andropov, one who speaks English, listens to jazz, drinks Scotch, this leader might use “the power” and here we go hopping again. But lo, he dies and who takes his place but another tired old leader. No action is expected until some new energetic leader comes on stage, and yes, there are some of these younger more vibrant fellows waiting in the wings.

This characterization is a caricature, but it brings out the essential point regarding context and perspective. In this respect, we would do better to stand things on their heads. Soviet leaders don’t do much leading at all because they don’t have “the power.” They can send divisions to Afghanistan or put people in jail. But since Khrushchev’s time they have found it increasingly difficult to alter even in small ways the behavior of those in the system over which they preside.

What, then, is this “system”? At the risk of trying to take the whole apple in one bite, I would argue that it amounts to networks of interlocking dependencies among people, networks stratified by office, rank and privilege, networks within which action is structured by the control of access to these things, and how control of access to some of them is exchanged for access to others. It is a system of particulars. There are no “general laws” that govern its movement, in either the statutory or historical sense, save perhaps one: general interference into the net-

separatists, etc.) and it counts as a resource in the exchange system. If we apply this perspective to some of the things discussed by Manning, something radically different from her account comes into focus.

Take the matter of “decentralization” which she discusses at length in her first article. Local enterprises and local governments, she argues, are being empowered by law to assert more control over local conditions. While it is true that such laws exist, it is also true that they have (a) existed since the late ‘50s (b) are re-legislated every few years (c) have accomplished nothing effective to date. They have not disrupted existing arrangements—the networks—nor might they be expected to.

### Who gets housing?

The housing question illustrates this impasse of reforms in local government and the national economy. Because supply is so short, control over access to housing is a potent resource. Since 1957, Central Committee decrees and Supreme Soviet statutes have ordered industrial ministries that control their own housing to surrender it to local governments. The aim is two-fold. Local governments reputedly do a better and more efficient job of managing housing stock. And ministries that control housing have a decided advantage over those that don’t in recruiting and retaining good workers. The result is labor imbalances that ramify through the entire economy to its detriment.

Producers goods ministries (sector A) were privileged by the early five-year plans, whose purpose it was to build heavy industry. Such ministries received or built their own housing. Ministries in the consumer goods area (sector B) were correspondingly disadvantaged. As time went by it became clear to the central planners that growth in both sectors depends more and more on sector B. Not only is the incentive of all workers to

continue to build, the better units for themselves. Weak ministries, those in sector B, have surrendered their housing as the decrees require. This is one reason behind the fact that the central planners have been unable to control a factor as elemental as the relative rates of growth between sectors A and B. This inability further reduces the influence of the central planners in projecting and realizing growth in the national economy.

Are not the reforms discussed by Manning aimed, however, at decentralization and, hence, away from central direction of the economy? Here we would do well to distinguish between purported intentions and practical results. The first fact in this respect is that no reforms since Khrushchev’s time have disrupted for long the basic relations of power in society. Strong ministries remain strong, weak ones remain weak. Strength and weakness, moreover, are cause and consequence of the structure of the access system.

Sector B produces for consumers. By definition (and fact) it is weak because it controls access to things required only by consumers. Its bargaining position for scarce resources compares unfavorably with sector A because ministries in the producers goods sector control what other units in both sectors need in order to produce. Sector A ministries and their subunits can and do drive up the “price.” The Soviet press often carries stories of how a firm producing, say, construction materials fails to deliver the planned and contracted allotments to its customers. What can the customers do? They are obviously in a bind. No materials, no construction. No construction, no plan fulfillment; and there are penalties for this. So they must offer something more in exchange for what the plan and their contracts already entitle them to.

What this something more amounts to in a given case will depend upon the case itself: who is involved, what access they control, to whom they are connected.



## PERSPECTIVES

# Rich get richer and the poor get taxed

The following is an edited version of a new report called "Taxing the Poor" prepared by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington-based research and analysis group.

**A**T TAX TIME THIS YEAR, one group of Americans found themselves saddled with higher taxes than ever before—the working poor.

Not only were they the main target of the 1981 and 1982 budget cuts, but they also have been harshly treated by federal tax policies of recent years.

The 1981 tax act, which conferred large tax benefits on high-income taxpayers and large corporations, largely ignored the working poor. It did virtually nothing to alleviate the major increases that inflation was causing in their tax burdens.

The federal tax burdens of families at the poverty line now are double or triple what they were six years ago. In addition, millions of working families below the poverty line—who used to be exempt from federal income tax by virtue of their low incomes—must now pay taxes. In contrast, the tax burdens of the most affluent and the largest corporations are lower than they have been in many years—corporate income taxes now comprise only about 6 percent of all federal revenues, compared to 25 percent in the '50s and '60s.

In recent years the federal income tax threshold (the point at which families must start paying income tax) has dropped far below the poverty line, so that those who live in poverty now have a steadily increasing portion of their in-

come fall \$2,500 below.

Indexing of the federal income tax brackets, the personal exemption and the standard deduction, which starts next year, will not halt the precipitous drop in tax thresholds in relation to the poverty line. The earned income tax credit (EITC), one of the most critical parts of the tax code for low-income working families, is not indexed. So more and more families below the poverty line will be pushed into tax-paying brackets in coming years.

This tax treatment of low-income working families is vastly different from previous federal policies. From 1975 through 1980, the tax thresholds were set an average of nearly \$1,000 above the poverty level. Currently, working poor families of four with gross incomes as low as 83 percent of poverty have federal income taxes, as well as social security taxes, withheld from their paychecks. By 1986, four person families at 78 percent of poverty will be required to pay income taxes. And the larger the family, the harsher the situation.

Not only have the tax thresholds fallen well below the poverty line, but the tax burdens that poor families must pay have also increased substantially. In 1978, the tax threshold fell below the poverty line only for single persons, and the maximum federal income tax they paid was \$16. Three- and four-person households at the poverty line paid no federal income tax in 1978, and the earned income tax credit offset a substantial share of their social security payroll taxes, as Congress had intended.

Today this has changed dramatically. Income taxes on persons at the poverty level have risen dramatically from 1978 to the present. The change is even more

result is an extremely heavy increase in the federal tax burdens of poverty-level families as the following table illustrates.

Combined Income and Payroll Taxes on Families with Incomes at the Poverty Level

	One	Four	Six
1978	\$216	\$269	\$538
1983	\$544	\$999	\$1,420
1984	\$579	\$1,076	\$1,523
1985	\$626	\$1,166	\$1,648

## How did this happen?

The roots of this striking rise in the tax burdens of the nation's poorest working families lie in the Economic Recovery and Tax Act of 1981 (ERTA). Up until 1981, a basic pattern had developed in tax legislation—every few years Congress would cut taxes to offset some or all of the effects of inflation, and in doing so, Congress would raise the standard deduction or the personal exemption, or both. In addition, in the 1975 and 1978 tax acts, Congress established and then enlarged the earned income tax credit to help shield poor families from income taxes and to offset some of the impact of payroll taxes, which were beginning to rise rapidly, on these families.

Yet in 1981, this pattern ended. After a period of particularly high inflation, the Reagan administration presented a massive tax-cutting package that contained large business tax breaks for corporations and affluent taxpayers but failed to make any adjustment whatsoever in the standard deduction, the personal exemption or the earned income tax credit. Congress subsequently ratified this approach.

Tax cuts in the 1981 act that were steered to the affluent were by no means limited to the Kemp-Roth across-the-board reductions in tax rates. Another provision of the 1981 tax act, for example, lowered the maximum tax rate on capital gains to 20 percent. Today, the combined marginal income and payroll tax rate on a family of four earning \$12,000 a year is actually higher than the tax rates that wealthy investors pay on profits from capital gains.

Several other provisions of the 1981 act were also heavily aimed at upper-income brackets. The reduction in the top tax rate on unearned income from 70 percent

approximately \$250 billion over the course of the decade—conferred 80 percent of their benefits on the 2,000 largest corporations in the U.S., the top .1 percent of all corporations.

Moreover, the working poor families whose tax burdens are rising so fast are, in a number of cases, the same families who have borne the brunt of the deep budget cuts of the past few years.

Several recent studies have shed additional light on this situation. A new Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study shows that even before the effects of inflation on tax burdens are taken into account, the combined effect of the budget and tax changes enacted during this administration has been to reduce the income and benefits of families below \$10,000 a year by \$23 billion during the 1983-1985 period. At the same time, the budget and tax changes have raised the incomes of the wealthiest 1.4 percent of families—those with incomes of more than \$80,000 a year—by \$35 billion.

Equally telling are the studies of the General Accounting Office (GAO) and several universities and private research organizations on the effects of working poor families of the 1981 budget cuts in

## People living below poverty level are paying more and more taxes since the new reforms.

the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC). The GAO found that in the five cities in which it conducted its study, low-income working families terminated from AFDC lost an average of \$115-\$229 a month (or \$1,380 to \$2,750 on an annualized basis) in income and benefits following the cuts. GAO also found that 30 percent to 60 percent of these families lacked health-care coverage for their children after the AFDC cuts, that (in four of the five cities) one-half had run out of food at some point after being terminated from AFDC and that 24 percent to 35 percent had had their phone shut off.

## What to do?

The tax burdens of poverty families could be alleviated through adjustments in the earned income tax credit, the standard deduction or personal exemption. While raising the standard deduction deserves careful consideration at some point, the most effective strategy for the short-term—using a relatively limited amount of dollars—is to enlarge the earned income tax credit because that credit is entirely restricted to low-income households, while other households also use the standard deduction and the personal exemption.

The earned income tax credit has been eroded to such a degree since it first entered the tax code in 1975 that by next year the total value of EITC in constant dollars will be less than half what it was in 1975. The decline is even sharper when the real value of the earned income tax credit in 1985 is compared to its value in 1979. The comparison with 1979 is important because this was the first year that the EITC expansion legislated in 1978 to help offset recently enacted increases in Social Security payroll taxes took effect (offsetting social security payroll tax increases for the working poor has always been one of the principal purposes of the EITC). Since 1979 there have been further increases in payroll taxes, without adjusting the EITC. By next year 60 percent of the total value the earned income tax credit had in 1979 will have disappeared, despite the fact that the poverty population is far larger than it was in 1979.

Also, the real value of the earned income tax credit will erode even further in coming years because, unlike the tax

Continued on page 22



comes eaten up by federal income taxes. In 1983, the tax threshold for a family of four was \$1,383 below the poverty line. For a family of six, the tax threshold was \$3,900 below. This year the tax threshold for a family of four is \$1,830 below the poverty line, while a family of six will have to pay income taxes if its income is \$4,000 below the line. By 1985, according to the Joint Congressional Committee on Taxation, a family of four will have to pay taxes if it is \$2,166 below the poverty line. And by 1986, the tax threshold will

striking when social security payroll taxes are added in. Although one of the principal purposes of the earned income tax credit is supposed to be to offset part of the payroll tax burdens of working poor families, payroll taxes have risen sharply in recent years without corresponding increases in the earned income tax credit. From 1978 to 1985, payroll taxes on families at the poverty level will roughly double. When the increases in both income taxes and payroll taxes on poverty-level families are considered together, the

to 50 percent benefited only taxpayers with incomes above \$85,600 a year (for couples). The sharp reductions in the estate tax benefited only the wealthiest 3 percent of American families. The ill-conceived All-Savers Certificate provisions benefited only the top 20 percent of taxpayers. And the business depreciation provisions (generally known as the Accelerated Cost Recovery System, or ACRS)—which even after the mid-course corrections in the 1982 tax act will still provide corporations with tax breaks of





**Family Portrait with Fidel**  
By Carlos Franqui  
Random House, 1984, \$17.95

## POLITICS

By Marc Cooper

Franqui's memoirs, which were originally published in Spanish three years ago, reveal much more about the author than his intended subjects, Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution. Frequently clouded by what borders on in-palace gossip and a recounting of emotionally charged political and personal rivalries to which Franqui was party, the narrative falls short of seriously probing what went wrong—or right—with the revolution.

Franqui's book has gathered an enormous amount of attention in the U.S. because its author was for years a Castro "insider." An early adherent to Castro's guerrilla war against the Batista dictatorship, Franqui became the director of the rebels' clandestine radio transmitter. After the victorious Rebel Army marched into Havana in January 1959, Franqui went on to become the director of the daily newspaper *Revolucion*, which lived up the first years of post-revolutionary Cuba with its unpredictability and frequent irreverence.

But as Franqui explains it, he was always uncomfortable with Castro's flirtings with the Soviets and became increasingly disenchanted with what he considered to be a betrayal of the "socialist humanism" originally promised by the revolution. Finally, in 1968 Franqui departed Cuba to take up exile first in Italy and then in Spain.

While the book's forward, written by exiled Catholic author Guillermo Cabrera Infante, lauds Franqui's approach as that of "a poet and not as your run-of-the-mill political agent," the writing is quite disappointing. Much of the prose is sophomoric in its superficiality and the almost complete lack of political sophistication in Franqui's analysis is truly astounding. It is difficult to imagine how, even by Franqui's account, a society as politicized as Cuba can turn out critics so ungrounded in the theory they profess to be steeped in.

His major thesis is that the revolution has been corrupted by one-man rule, pronounced bureaucratic privilege and Cas-

# Franqui on Castro: tunnel-vision history

tro's insistence that Cuba remain dependent on sugar exports. On this last point, Franqui proposes that Cuba be "self-reliant and economically independent." Drawing on his own peasant background, he then suggests a series of down-home recipes for self-sufficiency.

Ironically, this very idea is at the center of the Stalinism that he accuses the Cuban government of following. The emergence of Stalinism in the Soviet Union can be directly traced to the Soviet dictator's concocted theory of "socialism in one country" and the refusal to recognize the global and interdependent nature of the modern economy. If Cuba is in fact dependent on export to richer and more powerful countries, this is a deplorable situation, but one that is hardly the fault of Cuba or Castro. Franqui's simple solu-

results there were scarcely what he is looking for.

Franqui's criticism of personal rule by Castro and the emergence of a bureaucratic elite is more central to his book. Unfortunately, however, Franqui's critique rarely transcends the petty and the personal. His allegations of corruption of the revolution are based on certain undeniable facts.

Few serious students, and even sympathizers of Cuba would deny that it is Fidel that holds most, if not all levers of power. And it is also no secret that wage differentials exist in Cuba and that some sectors of the population live better than others. The study of these phenomena, nevertheless, is not a new field. It was opened up inside the heart of the Russian revolution itself by Trotsky a half century ago and further elaborated by a plethora of social

Incarnate in Franqui's exposition of Cuban history is, however, Fidel's younger brother Raul. Franqui's critique loses credibility when ascribing one problem after another to plotting among "Raul and the old Prague Communists."

The author even goes so far in his conspiracy theorizing as to assert that what he calls Castro's profoundly humanitarian behavior while fighting in the Sierra Maestra—no mistreatment or torture of prisoners, no looting or sacking, utmost deference to the *campesinos*—was a mere, coldly calculated "tactic."

At three different junctures in the book, Franqui is at a loss to explain why Castro has opted for a tight control of culture. All the author can tell us is that "Fidel always preferred sports to culture." To "prove" his point, we are told that during a trip to New York in 1960, as much as Franqui tried to get Castro to the art museum, Fidel preferred to wander around the zoo. Later that year, Franqui tells how his feeling were hurt when at a dinner in Havana, Fidel lavished his attention on visiting U.S. boxer Joe Louis rather than on two European writers seated at the same table.

Also missing from the book is discussion on how Castro first broke the old Cuban Communist Party and then merged it with his 26th of July Movement, creating a new organization that was re-dubbed the Cuban Communist Party. Considering that supposed Communist Party plotting and infiltrating is given so much importance by Franqui, his omission of that chapter of Cuban history is inexplicable.

This shoddy approach to history leads Franqui to some sweeping generalizations that portray a prejudiced view of Cuban reality. Using a stereotypical description of Havana as a dreary Communist capital inhabited by a dour, unsmiling population, Franqui writes:

"Everything was different. But nothing had changed. Only the power had changed hands."

This type of conclusion shares the same dogmatism of which Franqui accuses Castro. Identifying faults and abuses in a society does not necessarily mean that the society as a whole has failed or has produced nothing of value. To read Franqui's monochromed descriptions of Cuba reminds me of reading the Cuban paper *Granma*'s account of life in the U.S. as being one endless round of racist attacks and cancellations of electrical services by heartless utility companies.

Racism and poverty are real aspects of American society. But we also have traditions, ethics, morality and technology that merit close examination. The same with Cuba. Yes, Fidel holds too much power. And yes, the power of mass organizations is limited by bureaucratic rule.

But to say, as Franqui does in his concluding chapter, that Cubans have forgotten how to laugh, that "only the power had changed hands," that the literacy campaign had been negated by schooling privileges for the children of Party members and that the eradication of unemployment was no longer a gain because people are forced to work, is to write off two-and-a-half decades of social transformation by an entire nation without contributing to an understanding of what that nation's ills really are.

At one point midway through the book, Franqui confesses to being a "nihilist." He is right on the mark. He also laments the disappearance of the old July 26th Movement, which he lauds for being devoid of "any specific political ideology." And he is bored by discussion of institutional change, which he short-circuits into the purely personal realm.

In the end, Franqui's theses appear very much in the tradition of what Isaac Deutscher called the Arthur Koestler, or the God-that-failed syndrome. It usually affects people who join the Communist Party or a revolution worshipping "The Leader," and who then become repelled and alienated from any notion of social change when The Leader accepts that adulation.

Marc Cooper recently returned from Havana on assignment for *Mother Jones*.

*Franqui's major thesis is that the revolution has been corrupted by one-man rule, bureaucratic privilege and Castro's insistence that Cuba remain dependent on sugar exports.*

tion of "doing away with sugar" by diversifying and industrializing the economy is, in any case, something the Cubans tried nearly 20 years ago and failed at. Such an undertaking requires enormous hard-currency readily available to Cuba.

This leads him right back into the global nature of the economy. Franqui should remember that the only recent revolution that seriously tried to apply his formula was Cambodia, and the

scientists ranging from Isaac Deutscher to Ernest Mandel to Charles Bettelheim. But Franqui seems immune from any organized, systematic analysis of what he sees as abuse and injustice.

### Conspiracy theory.

Instead, he tends toward a near-conspiracy theory suggesting that Fidel was always a Communist sympathizer, or at the least, was a skillful manipulator of the Communists. The Devil





Some Victorians liked sex;  
some even loved it.

in *Education of the Senses* the middle class sometimes seems to be hermetically sealed off in its massive brick homes, far from any interest in or concern about the working class or aristocracy. The wholehearted emphasis upon bourgeois sexual pleasure smooths over complexities—and in the process, the richly varied forms sexual happiness took for the Victorian bourgeoisie.

Political principles led Engels to a common-law marriage with an Irish factory girl; Eleanor Marx never married Edward Aveling. Engels and Marx were also part of the bourgeoisie.

The sad and tormented lives of the lawyer A.J. Munby and his beloved maid-of-all-work are as rich in the complexities of bourgeois love as the flagrant "normality" of the Todds. Obsessed with dirt, Munby encouraged Hannah to do the dirtiest and most unsavory jobs as homages of love to him; whilst he never carried a coal shuttle or cleaned a privy, he equated such work with sexual pleasure and found his greatest emotional pleasure in studying and loving working-class women who did the hardest, dirtiest work. But the servants, factory workers and farm hands who often initiated the bourgeoisie in their sexual experience are strangely absent from *Education of the Senses*.

At the heart of Gay's avoidance of so many obvious issues is his simplistic use of Freud. He does not have to unravel the meanings of the diaries or letters that he quotes because the answer is invariably "a penis." A psychoanalytic reading of the past can be useful, but it is not an exhaustive reading, as Gay suggests. Freud, moreover, was not simply a revolutionary modern thinker; he was also a Victorian.

As Gay himself pointed out, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which the theory of the Oedipus complex was first posited, Freud could write, "We extol childhood as happy, because it does not yet know sexual appetite."

Gay can never be accused of forgetting himself in this embarrassing way. But he does not fully analyze the implications of defining Freud—a thorough-going bourgeois Victorian in his upbringing, marriage and medical training—as the first modern. Thus at times Freud appears as an actor upon the scenes described, at others as a commentator, and at still others as a kind of modern nemesis, given incredible powers of insight. Since Freud has supplied Gay with an unchanging paradigm for sexual behavior, he can range back and forth through the century; changes in attitude and knowledge come only with the revelations of Freud.

Do not read *Education of the Senses* for a new approach to the study of sexuality; do not read it for particularly subtle interpretations of Victorian sexual mores. But do read it as a highly engaging and wide-ranging consideration of heterosexual marriage. Gay's case studies remain fascinating and his narrative of sexual mores is always interesting, no matter how much one might quarrel with his interpretations.

Martha Vicinus teaches English and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan, and is the author of the forthcoming book, *Independent Women: Love, Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920*.

# An imperfect consummation

*Education of the Senses*

By Peter Gay

Oxford University Press,  
534 pp., \$30.00

By Martha Vicinus

Peter Gay has just discovered what some of us have known all along: some Victorians liked sex; some even loved it. On the other hand, some men and some women approached heterosexuality with fear, anguish and distrust.

The first volume of Gay's study of "The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud," it focuses on marriage in the U.S. and Europe. Far-reaching in its references, it includes German, French, English, American and Scandinavian sources. Gay has an admirable sense of the major issues of what he calls "the bourgeois century."

But his story is limited. The *Education of the Senses* is not a study of all senses, or all sensual options, for Gay considers marriage to be the normative sexual experience. Bourgeois sexuality in "its mature form" is defined as love between couples of approximately the same age, race and class. His combination of conventional historiography and relentless Freudianism make this a predictably narrow book.

In spite of a long chapter titled "Pressures of Reality," Gay's Freudianism commits him to a rigid ahistorical definition of sexuality. He never moves beyond an energy-release model of sex, always seeing sex as a drive that builds up and must find release in overt or covert action. The ideas of such therapists as Michel Foucault and Jeffrey Weeks, who argue for the social construction of sexuality, never get into Gay's text. The pervasiveness of sexual discourse in modern life, tellingly argued if not fully documented in Foucault's *History of Sexuality*:

*An Introduction*, needs to be addressed.

Also, Gay does not build upon recent historical debates about the nature and construction of sexuality, instead attacking a vague group of popularizers who have perpetrated the notion that the Victorian woman was either a prim, proper wife or a lusty prostitute, while the man was a hypocritical husband guilty of countless amours. But feminist historians such as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Judith Walkowitz and Christine Stansell (or such neo-Freudians as Juliet Mitchell, Nancy Chodorow and Ethel Spector Person), have destroyed these stereotypes and transformed our understanding of Victorian sexual behavior in the past decade.

Gay's book opens with a lively and engaging account of the love life of Mabel Loomis Todd, happily married to an Amherst College astronomy professor, while simultaneously carrying on a passionate affair with another professor, Austin Dickinson, a man 20 years her senior. David Todd was an inveterate philanderer and presumably had his own reasons for being relieved that his wife found her own extramarital love. But he also appears to have found sexual pleasure in encouraging Mabel's affair with Austin. Mabel, devoid of guilt, adored intercourse and meticulously recorded its pleasures over her long life.

Yet Gay does not limit his discussion of female sexuality to the enthusiastic Mabel Todd. Next he introduces us to the neurotic Swedish novelist, free woman and diary-writer, Victoria Benedictsson. Married at an early age to an older man, Benedictsson appears to have been opposite from Todd. She felt little interest in or satisfaction from her marriage, and like so many unhappily married Vic-

torians, found solace in intellectual and spiritual pursuits. She carried on a long spiritual affair with the Danish writer Georg Brandes, which was finally—at his behest—consummated. But unable to find happiness with Brandes, who was obviously cooling, she committed suicide a few months later.

Benedictsson's tormented writings reveal her anger and anguish over male privilege, which is reductively interpreted as "penis envy" by Gay. Indeed, he glosses an unfinished entry dreading "to be deprived of..." as "it was dreadful to be deprived of a penis." But why not happiness? Or love? Or success as a writer? Or a compound of many things, given the incompleteness of the entry?

The result of such comments is to simplify our notions of Victorian sexuality and to confirm the very thing Gay is working so hard to dispel—namely the Victorian obsession with sex as something hidden and secret, as a stolen pleasure. The tortured sexual self-analysis of Benedictsson only confirms that for every Mabel Loomis Todd, one can find a range of other, more complex responses and attitudes toward sexuality.

Gay's case study approach is well suited to his Freudian views, but it raises questions about how typical these two women were. We also learn little about how Brandes, David Todd and Austin Dickinson felt about their sexual lives.

Although Gay deplores the Victorian focus on female rather than male sexuality, he does not offer a new approach. He mentions only in passing such Victorian male fears as impotence and venereal disease. But Gay is interested in showing the ways in which boys and men learned about the opposite sex. Sometimes his discussion is acute, as in his analysis of pornography. Yet at other times truisms are made to seem portentous discoveries.

Thus we are told, "There can be no question: one could learn a great deal in the bourgeois century by reading and looking, and many bourgeois were inclined to do both." Such self-evident

truths are combined with reductive Freudian interpretations of specific cases. As an example of the kind of information a father might give his son, Gay quotes a letter Joseph Lyman wrote to his four-year-old son, describing New York City:

*Some of the people here are very naughty. There is a dancing girl in a cellar who takes off most of her clothes and dances before men. The men eat peanuts and clap their hands.... I am afraid they will all go to that dreadful place where the girl is who had the head of John the Baptist cut off and brought in on the waiter.*

Gay comments, "Urban life as glimpsed at by Joseph Lyman is in itself remarkable enough; the erotic excitement provided for one little boy, food for his burgeoning oedipal imagination, is more remarkable still." Such in-

## Freud has given Gay an unchanging paradigm.

formation deserves more careful conceptualization of the relationship between father and son. Is Joseph Lyman simply following an age-long tradition of initiating his son into "manly knowledge" at an early age? Or is he showing off his own newfound knowledge of city life? How have father-son relationships changed by 1865, so that Lyman not only tells about dancing girls, but also warns that they will go to hell?

### Bourgeois sexual pleasure.

The decision to discuss all alternatives to and forms of middle-class marriage in another volume structurally reinforces the categories of "normal" and "deviant," though Gay himself is scrupulous in avoiding such labels. Not only is all discussion of homoerotic relationships neglected, but so are unusual marriages. This is most obvious in the failure to discuss any cross-class relations. Presumably these will appear in later volumes, but



By Lester Rodney

In my review of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's autobiography I did something that readers may justifiably find irritating. I mentioned that Kareem, just turned 37, was the second oldest player in the professional league—and didn't bother telling who is the oldest. Elvin Hayes, 38, once a big star, is a little-used substitute with Houston. Elvin is bowing out, leaving Kareem as the game's oldest player next season, which he has proclaimed his last. (Ah, to be an old man of 38—or 68 again!)

CBS's Brent Musberger, who has some sense of a world out there beyond the box scores, did mention in the afterglow of Georgetown's NCAA tournament victory that Coach John Thompson is the first black coach to lead a college basketball team to the number-one spot.

Thompson came awfully close two years ago. In the final game, Georgetown trailed North Carolina by one point and had the ball with plenty of time to set up a winning shot. Dribbling downcourt, sophomore guard Fred Brown lost his composure in the pandemonium and passed the ball to North Carolina's James Worthy. Though it's all supposed to be a game, that's the kind

of thing that can haunt a young man for many years.

Which lent a little poignance to the moment at the Georgetown bench when the game ended (in those seconds that a quick post-game commercial used to wipe out, until the networks realized that fans would hate the product that robbed them of immediate player and fan reaction). Coach Thompson moved quickly to envelop Brown in a lengthy, eloquently silent embrace. Though not a major factor in the victory, Brown had played soundly and had come through near the end with two pressure-packed free throws.

Last word on Thompson: He is proudest of the fact that of the 44 players recruited to Georgetown during his coaching regime, 42 have graduated, including Brown and Gene Smith, the only two seniors on this imposing squad.

Don't go awarding next year's NCAA tournament to Georgetown in advance. That's logic, and logic doesn't necessarily work in college sports. Remember way back to last season's unstoppable Nebraska football juggernaut—not to mention the late-lamented number one, North Carolina's All-American-loaded basketball team?

I admit to an unfair first im-

pression of Steve Young, Brigham's descendant who signed that slightly preposterous contract with the L.A. Express of the New United States Football League. He's a good athlete with poise, self-confidence, an accurate arm and a nice touch for a rookie. But his tendency to look to run, rather than thinking of it as a last resort, could bring him to early grief in the pros. I've seen no evidence that he has the velocity to buzz one across the field to the guy running the sideline pattern—nor the strength for the occasional real longie. That could come later, and he could be a good one. But bet that Don Shula at Miami wouldn't swap last year's

seventh quarterback pick, Dan Marino, for Young even up.

Though obviously black players have come to provide more pro basketball players (and more great ones) than white players, there is a touch of exaggeration in the talk of total black domination of the game.

A coach selecting his starting forwards from such as Bird, Vanderweghe, Tripucka, Ruland and Walton wouldn't necessarily throw up his arms in dismay, especially with McHale on the bench. Other white starting forwards are Benson, Vranes, Rambis and Iavaroni, with the 76ers Bobby Jones another supersub and Cham-

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bers and O'Koren as occasional starters. Centers include Sikma, Adams, Laimbeer, Issel and rookie Stepanovich, who will develop apace, as well as starters Eaton and Corzine and backups Schayes, Mokeski, Gminski, Cook and Nater. Paleskin strength in the NBA is most shallow at guard, with Paxson and Macy the only top-flight starters, backed up by Ainge, Bratz, Grunfeld, Dunleavy and Sundvold.

Another afterthought on the Abdul-Jabbar book review. We mentioned for non-sports-fan skeptics that nothing guarantees a seven-footer's becoming a great basketball player. Kareem's own contemporaries provide reasonable proof. When he graduated high school, no less than 60 other seven-foot centers were also finishing their high-school careers. I hope they are all doing well in something, because it sure isn't in basketball.

**Editor's note:** Be it modestly recalled that in January, Lester Rodney predicted in *ITT* that Georgetown would win the NCAA championship. At that time the Hoyas rated behind North Carolina, Kentucky and DePaul. (We won't even ask readers for half the money that they won at such good odds.)

#### Charlie Haden: The Ballad of the Fallen (ECM Records)

Jazz has always been political. It is after all the indigenous musical expression of the urban black experience. And, as they say, it put the sin in syncopation. Yet jazz politics are almost always implicit politics, the politics of form embedded in the emotional textures of the sound.

Bassist Charlie Haden is one of the few jazz performers to make overtly political statements. A "free jazz" innovator who had toured with Ornette Coleman and Keith Jarrett, Haden decided, in 1969, to form his own band: The Liberation Music Orchestra. This loose, 13-piece agglomeration included such luminaries as pianist-composer Carla Bley (who also conducts the group), cornetist Don Cherry, tenor saxophonist Dewey Redman and percussionist Paul Motian. Their critically hailed record (on Impulse Records) wove traditional and folk melodies into ensemble improvisations, including four songs about the Spanish Civil War, a thematic piece on the 1968 Democratic Convention, and the celebrated "Song for Che."

Impelled by recent political developments, Haden reformed the Liberation Music Orchestra last year. Many original members rejoined Bley and Haden, buttressed with some recent jazz stars. *The Ballad of the Fallen*, their new record, is a musical and political triumph—haunting, inspiring, menacing, terrifying and always deeply moving.

Most free jazz solos seem longwinded, meandering through themes without really exploring them. But LMO restrains itself, giving full flight to musical innovation without mercilessly extending the solo. (As a result, the music is as accessible to a layperson as to an aficionado.) The imaginative improvisations by Cherry and Redman, as well as Jim Pepper (saxophone) and Jack Jef-

fers (tuba), are particularly compelling. There are hints in the horns and woodwinds of Kurt Weill's ominous score for *Threepenny Opera*, interwoven with Latin American and Spanish themes. And, as ever, Haden's bass lines float hauntingly down the scale, evoking a funeral march one moment, lilting to heroic resistance the next.

Underneath the music lies a vibrant imagination that uses musical themes to explore political ideas. The Spanish Civil War still haunts Haden. He and Bley have crafted four pieces from traditional Catalan and Spanish melodies. Spain remains a painful historical reminder of fascist brutality, and its overriding political immediacy complements the urgency of the music. "The People United Will Never Be Defeated" powerfully re-

creates the anthem of Chilean resistance, while the title song was inspired by a poem found on the body of a student killed by the Salvadoran National Guard at a university sit-in.

The threat of nuclear war provides the major underlying theme for Haden's work. "It's not just the reason for this music," he comments. "It's the reason for everything I do. I think that whether you write music or poems, dance or make films, the end result is to communicate honest human values, and in doing that to try to improve the quality of life. That's a political commitment right there."

M.K.

#### Elvis: The First Live Recordings

(The Music Works PB 3601)

We're not talking Costello here—we're talking the King, captured in mono glory at

Louisiana Hayride shows in 1955 and 1956. These tracks were discovered by Louisiana rock entrepreneur Marshall Sehorn who, with two other businessmen, formed the Music Works label to distribute them domestically. (Elvis' main label, RCA, will distribute them in the rest of the world.)

This 15-minute mini-LP is more than a curio. Together with the wonderful RCA album, *The Sun Sessions*, it pinpoints the intersection of blues and hillbilly music that Presley claimed as his and rock'n'roll's own.

Hear how he turns Chuck Berry's "Maybelline" into a confident sexual commentary, or how he transforms the innocuous contemporary novelty "Tweedle Dee" into a meaningful narrative. Even his banter with guitarist Scotty Moore and bass player Bill

## ON RECORD

Black is interesting, as the three attempt to bend received musical notions to new forms.

The sound is all right; Elvis and Moore can always be heard, even when Black can't. And the album ends with a wonderfully super-charged, terminally blowsy version of "Hound Dog," in which an exuberant Elvis is nearly drowned out by the screams of 10,000 teenagers.

The cover's a tad morbid, and some of the information and spelling is sloppy. But the music is there, full-blown, rowdy and innovative after all these years.

C.W.

#### Laura Nyro, *Mother's Spiritual* (Columbia FC 39215)

Her first album in five years finds this former folkie grown more political and less personal.

As usual, the album features Nyro's lilting blend of folk motifs and Broadway stylings. It has the charming feel of mid-'70s Joni Mitchell and the same kind of appealing limpidity.

Nyro uses her liquid alto to croon to her child (in the beautiful lullaby "To a Child") and, on the whole, matches her treatments to her topics. Most of the songs work, especially when Nyro sticks to the personal. Her love songs ring truer than her anti-patriarchal tracts, like "The Right to Vote" or the musically rich, lyrically clichéd "A Free Thinker."

I've mistrusted Nyro's impulses toward eclecticism in the past. Except for her classic collaboration with Labelle on *Gonna Take a Miracle*, I have found her fatuous and instantly dated. But on this album, Nyro sounds rested, vigorous and resolute. And even when her lyrics descend to banality (the "tree" sequence at the beginning of side two), the music is open, gracious and expertly played.

C.W.

Contributors: Michael S. Kimmel, Carlo Wolff

Carla Bley and Charlie Haden





## ARTS»ENTERTAINMENT



## INFORMATION

# USIA teeters on fine line of censorship

By Pat Aufderheide

The United States Information Agency proudly distinguishes itself from ministries of propaganda in other countries by its mandate to tell the truth—real information, not agitprop or ideology.

The mandate sounds like an indisputable Good Thing. But it's no easy task, even if you assume that there is no such thing as pure information, "truth" without a frame or context. And the way that the USIA fulfills its mission has always been a point of contention.

In the Reagan era, the USIA has moved from being a contentious federal agency to being a laughingstock. The agency seems to have taken the administration's enthusiastic encouragement of boosterism a little too literally. When copies of a supposed blacklist of liberals and other "unacceptables" began to circulate beyond the circles of USIA officials responsible for choosing traveling spokespeople, Congress investigated the agency and its leader, Charles Wick (whose previous claim to fame was producing a Three Stooges movie).

"It's very perplexing," Wick

said to a Congressional subcommittee last week. Why? Because the blacklists, which he claims were drawn up without his knowledge, contain names not only of known liberals, but also of people who are dead, people whom the USIA wants to use, and people who have refused to work for the agency, while it ignores some obvious candidates for blackballing.

It's easy to laugh at a USIA so incompetent that it can't even do skulduggery well. But another recent scandal suggests that the problems at USIA go deeper than the venality of one admini-

colossus by charging stiff tariffs on American films. In 1948, at a United Nations conference though, some 30 nations signed a treaty known as the Beirut Agreement, in which they agreed to waive such tariffs for non-commercial films. This waiver can mean around \$50 to \$100 per print—a big deal to a small filmmaker. Each nation decides which films are noncommercial. In the U.S., the agency that passes judgment is the USIA. It approves 2,000 to 3,000 films a year, rejecting only a handful. Among the several dozen films rejected in the last year and a half were *In Our Own Backyards: Uranium Mining in the U.S.*; *Resurgence: The Movement for Equality vs. the Ku Klux Klan*; and *Secret Agent*, a documentary on dioxin.

Some filmmakers think they see a consistent bias here, against social criticism and for pro-corporate and pro-administration viewpoints. Now the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) is preparing to file a federal lawsuit, charging that the USIA has

The Beirut agreement says only that the films involved must be educational, scientific or cultural, although it also requires that they be "representative, authentic and accurate." It says nothing against films with a point of view. Not so with the USIA's regulations interpreting the treaty.

The taint of propaganda that always colors a government information agency may be what made the USIA so zealous in guarding against material that "by special pleading attempts generally to influence opinion, conviction or policy...to espouse a cause or conversely...to attack a particular persuasion." And perhaps the American free-enterprise spirit allowed films "for personnel training or commodity servicing," even if for a particular product, to be classified as educational, scientific or cultural. Ferreting out films with a "special point of view" makes the USIA walk a narrow line between sanctioning opinion and violating freedom of expression.

In the past, the USIA has done remarkably well in skirting

*SOLDIER GIRLS* was shot down by Defense Department disapproval.

media-loving administration that has proposed (and won) dramatic boosts in USIA's budgets; an independent film movement that has created a sizable body of work and several representing organizations; and a recession that has exposed key social issues—industrial, environmental, infrastructural—to public scrutiny.

John Mendenhall is understandably upset. He is the Chief Attestation Officer for the USIA, and for more than 20 years he has been screening films for this program. This is the first time he finds himself under attack, though it's probably true, just as he claims, that he is not acting differently now from in the pre-Reagan era. His self-justification exposes how important context is in the delivery of any truth.

## Permit denied.

The context around Mendenhall's actions has changed dramatically. Regulations allow Mendenhall to get advice from experts in other areas of government and from trade organizations. As the mood changes there, so does the USIA's verdict. For instance, a documentary on women Army recruits, *Soldier Girls*, was widely viewed and well received in the armed forces; a long positive review of the film even appeared in an Air Force publication distributed internationally. But when the USIA sent the film to the Defense Department in 1982, officers decided that foreigners might misunderstand or misinterpret some sequences. Permit denied. The ABC news documentary *The Killing Ground*, on hazardous

*Some filmmakers think they see a consistent bias against social criticism and for pro-corporate and pro-administration viewpoints.*

stration. They go right to the heart of defining what truth and objectivity are.

## Politics of tariffs.

The problem surfaced over the issue of exempting noncommercial films that go overseas from tariff regulations. Most nations try to protect their own film industries from the Hollywood

violated the first-amendment rights of filmmakers because its regulations amount to censorship.

The interesting thing about the CCR lawsuit is that it does not accuse the USIA of doing anything new. It faults regulations that have existed since 1966. But it does make a powerful case that the regulations are vulnerable to changing political winds.

controversy, issuing tens of thousands of permits with only occasional complaints. The only complainant to argue the point through the appeals process was the Coca-Cola company—until this group of independents came along.

The lawsuit marks a historic moment. Several forces have now converged on the USIA: a



wastes, went to the Gorsuch-Burford Environmental Protection Agency, which decided that the 1979 film was "mainly of historical interest," since the hazardous waste problem was virtually licked. (This decision came down just before the mismanagement of Superfund was discovered.) The Energy Department decided that *In Our Own Backyards* was one-sided because no experts said in it that uranium mining was safe.

Sometimes the USIA goes beyond government to consult other interested institutions, and then their vested interests become the standard of objectivity. For instance, the National Education Association advised against the fiction feature *Clarence and Angel*. This film, which portrays a black and Puerto Rican kid learning from each other in the hardscrabble urban-school atmosphere, shows teachers from a child's perspective, as forbiddingly looming. The NEA criticized the film for negative portrayal of teachers.

Not that the USIA takes the advice of experts blindly. For instance, *Secret Agent* was rejected even though it came with a letter to the filmmakers from Dow Chemical Company, a dioxin manufacturer, saying, "We wanted you to know that we feel that our view was fairly represented. Furthermore, while we do not agree with the views of our adversaries, we believe that their views were presented in a fair and balanced fashion."

Inside opinion carries heavy weight in an opinion-shaping agency. It always has, but in other times opinions were different. In 1976, for instance, *Sam Lovejoy's Nuclear War*, an anti-nuclear film, was approved for export, unlike several films, including *Save the Planet*, currently distributed by the same company, Green Mountain Post.

In the case of *Save the Planet*, "subject-matter specialists" thought foreigners might misunderstand the film's photo montages, which "invidiously" portrayed U.S. government leaders while showing protesters as heroes. Furthermore, the film "resurrected the traditional U.S. guilt" about using the A-bomb without simultaneously hailing "the progress in social thinking and planning of nuclear power since then." It is hard to know whether the subject-matter specialists were thinking of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's plans for us in case of nuclear attack, or of the major construction flaws discovered in power plants since Three Mile Island. Certainly the USIA never asked. Nor did it question the reservations of nursing "specialists," who warned the USIA that the film *Nursing: The Politics of Caring* described unionizing as a way to improve patient care, and therefore did "not represent both sides of the issues" or "the entire profession of nursing." Whether a film must address the entire profession in order to be "representative, authentic and accurate" was the dilemma turned into objective fact in the USIA offices.

#### Whose balance?

There are two problems here. One is the biased application of the concept of "balance," of getting all sides of the issue squarely on record. These days, only socially critical films seem to be required to have that balance. For instance, the Allied Corporation's *Handling Hazar-*

*dous Chemicals Safely* got a permit, unlike some other films dealing with chemical waste and hazardous substances. Environmental subjects seem acceptable if they resemble the Edison Electric Institute's *To Catch a Cloud*, described as "a thoughtful look at acid rain." The Atomic Industrial Forum's *Radiation—Naturally* and the Nuclear Support Services' *The Story of Radiation* got permits, although Sam Love's *Radiation: Impact on Life* was rejected because the film's "essential effect is to persuade to a point of view." And imagine such approved films as *ERA: The War between Women and Men under Siege: Life with the Modern Woman*—empty as they must surely be of contaminating "points of view."

Under this administration, the USIA has rediscovered the power of opinion. Right under the surface of its healthy respect for ideas, though, is a barely-

concealed contempt for the ability of individuals to make an informed opinion. Particularly vulnerable, apparently, is the foreigner, ever gullible and likely to misunderstand or misinterpret. This viewer could watch *The Killing Ground* and be led to believe "that the U.S. was not dealing with the problem [of hazardous wastes]." The general education of the generic foreigner is a heavy burden for an agency that need only judge whether or not a film is educational, scientific or cultural in nature.

A deeper problem exists, one that goes past the current interpretation of standing regulations. It lies in the regulations themselves, which permit highly interested interpretations. These rules exclude from the category "educational" any film that makes an argument, thus placing technical information in a value-free fantasyland. The USIA judged *In Our Own Backyards* "emotional rather than techni-

## Only socially critical films seem required to have balance.

cal" because it addresses the social context and consequences of uranium mining. Meanwhile, any utility company can get approval for a film on how to use its equipment, since the film only purveys "technical" information. Under this system of logic, information is only legitimate if it's value free—or at least value hidden. In the process, the ideals of fairness, objectivity and free speech get transformed into blandness, lack of controversiality and empty platitudes (and pesticide sales to the Third World).

© Pat Aufderheide

## CULTURE SHOCK



Deja-vu Department: Two films will have their premieres in May. *Sixteen Candles* is about a high-schooler with "two men in her life. One she can't have. And one she can't get rid of....The school geek keeps making moves on her everywhere she turns. But she's totally flipped over...the most significant male in the entire student body, only he doesn't know she exists." Whatever happened to sweet, wholesome movies like *Going All the Way* and *Sweater Girls*?

The other is *Hardbodies*, whose publicity pics go out in a plain brown wrapper. Based on an article in *Penthouse*, this film concerns "three middle-aged, successful, but far-from-sexy men" who "rent a summer beach house to take advantage of the sun, surf and scores of sexy girls." According to its director, Mark Griffiths, (MFA in film, UCLA), "The whole scenario...holds tremendous potential for a hilarious teen sex-comedy, even though some more serious social undertones exist beneath the surface." Perhaps we should be grateful that those undertones aren't floating on the surface.

—Linda A. Rabben

*High-school sweethearts yearn in SIXTEEN CANDLES (below) while HARDBODIES (above) coyly asks, "Is there life after sex?"*





# AIM

Continued from page 13

for Indians of the Ojibwa tribe, of which he is a member, and his educational programs have been the most successful of their kind for Indians anywhere.

Yet even in Bellecourt there is an undercurrent of frustration, as if he is certain that Indian self-help cannot outrace the feelings of rage that are everywhere welling up on America's reservations. Others, neither as careful of their words nor as trusting of the legal process as Bellecourt (or American Horse, Anita Parlow, Birgil Kills Straight or even Russell Means), anticipate a final confrontation—a 20th-century Little Big Horn referred to as the Battle of Greasy Grass Creek by Indians.

"We have guns, you know, GUNS," said one elderly Indian several weeks ago. "How many Indians do you think they [the Reagan administration] can kill before people get tired of it?"

And privately Indian leaders, members and non-members of AIM, admit that a violent confrontation between armed Indians dedicated to closing the reservations to whites and the U.S. government is a strong possibility.

The explosion could come at any moment. During a recent visit to Washington, D.C., Russell Means, who had come to speak at a conference commemorating the 11th anniversary of the Wounded Knee takeover, outlined the program of his new tribal party, TREATY (True Revolution for the Elders, Ancestors and Youth), in stark terms. "We want our own nation, our own sovereignty," Means said. "And if that means closing off the reservation, then we will do that. Right now we are building support for the move."

TREATY has gained adherents on Pine Ridge, a development that exemplifies just how frustrating the current situation is. The old Indian conservatism is gone, perhaps forever, replaced by a militancy that runs deeper than anything encountered since the warriors of Crazy Horse trapped George Armstrong Custer at Little Big Horn. The TREATY program includes issuing non-Indians visas and dismantling the BIA reservation bureaucracy.

But regardless of the militancy of his program, Means backs off from any talk of an Indian-U.S. confrontation or a Wounded Knee III.

"I read the papers," he says. "I see what happens in Grenada and I think, oh yeah, we're going to win against tanks and jets, against helicopters swooping in to 'rescue the hostages.'"

But not wanting a confrontation and being led into one are two different things. AIM's leadership, its spiritual hold on young native Americans and its high-profile tactics of the '70s ("Who ever cared until AIM came along?" one young Indian says) have raised expectations among Indians. Before Wounded Knee II, the Trail of Broken Treaties and the Alcatraz takeover, the American Indian was invisible, an anachronism born of liquor and guns ("going the way of the buffalo"), consigned to two worlds, one white and alien and the other half-Indian.

"At least with AIM there is a spark of hope," Stephanie Autumn Peltier said during a trip to Washington last year. "AIM gave pride to Indians. It convinced Indians that they could change things themselves."

Stephanie Peltier's husband Leonard is the other spark that Indian leaders say could set off an Indian-government confrontation. He is now serving two consecutive life sentences (plus time for an escape attempt) for the murder of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge reservation in 1975. There is evidence (made known primarily by Peter Matthiessen's book, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*) that Peltier could not have murdered the two agents and that the U.S. government attempted to engineer Peltier's murder by promising another Indian (Robert Hugh Wilson, a.k.a. "Standing Deer") a commutation

of his sentence.

"They want to murder Leonard," Stephanie Peltier said during her trip to Washington. "And the courts are slow. So we have a watch, a defense committee keeps an eye on him. We can't even get him transferred out of Marion [the federal penitentiary at Marion, Ill.] to another prison." Peltier's is a *cause celebre* for Native Americans, since he is a natural leader who has become a symbol of Indian hopes.

In prison Peltier teaches Lakota traditions and rituals (when he's not in solitary confinement), learns law and corresponds. The man who was supposed to murder Peltier, Robert Hugh Wilson (61 years old at this writing, a self-taught reader and writer) shares the same prison yard, though not the same cell. Their friendship began when Wilson went to Peltier on July 4, 1978, and told him that he was supposed to assassinate him. Matthiessen's investigations have shown that Wilson is probably not lying and that federal prison officials may have tried to cut a deal to "neutralize" Peltier.

AIM leaders are closely watching the Peltier case (though there are personality differences between Peltier and others in the organization). In early April, Peltier won a hearing in the U.S. District Court to determine the circumstances of FBI failure to reveal evidence that could free him. As of mid-April, Peltier and Wilson were fasting to protest prison conditions.

On the Pine Ridge reservation the cold took its toll. While the Peltier case is crucial to American Horse and just about every other Native American, the immediacy of the cold, which blew down from Canada the second week of December and stayed on well into March, highlighted different kinds of crises.

"Alcoholism is our biggest problem," American Horse says. "I ran for tribal chairman, and I said we'd get liquor off the reservation, and we did. And then there's suicide. And then unemployment. The companies we need to come in here to provide jobs don't want to lease the land, they want to buy it. We won't let them do that so they don't come in. So here we are."

American Horse has a deliberate, almost flat, way of speaking. When he speaks about the plight of his people, it is a litany. If Indians stay on the reservation, they remain dependent on what they see as a foreign government, a conqueror. But if they leave, they give up everything they believe in, since all they believe in is tied to the land.

In the Lakota religion a White Buffalo Woman came down from Bear Butte in the Black Hills and presented the seven Lakota tribes with a stone pipe and their laws. For the Cheyenne it is much the same. Sweet Medicine, a Cheyenne, went into the Black Hills (and also to Bear Butte) and returned with four arrows and the moral code of the Cheyenne. So it is the land that is sacred. It was given them in the beginning. It is their Jerusalem.

Says Joe American Horse, "The whole thing is over the land. Our land." He talks for a moment longer about health

clinics, schools, food, transportation, the coming tribal council meeting. Then suddenly, as if exhausted by the formality of making every subject an unresolved issue, he drops his guard.

"Listen," he says. "It's not going to be another Wounded Knee II. It's going to be another El Salvador. Another Nicaragua. All we can do is inform and educate the people. We're fighting a fire here, the U.S. government is fighting a fire here. And if they don't put it out there'll be a revolution. A real revolution."

Crazy Horse had such visions. In the nation's centennial year the man whom many Native Americans consider their greatest prophet and warrior took his band out of the Black Hills and headed west, through the Powder River Basin, and camped alongside Greasy Grass Creek. There, just as the Philadelphia Exposition was preparing for its much-heralded opening, he and a confederacy of other tribes fell on General Custer and wiped him out. It was a great day for the American Indian, a great victory. But it was the last of its kind. As Crazy Horse rode north, pursued by converging U.S. Army regiments, he must have reflected that such victories are dearly bought, that the search for true nationhood (for a nation within a nation, for complete sovereignty) is along a trail marked by blood. And we know, through the writings of Lakota-Sioux medicine man Black Elk, that like the leaders of AIM, Crazy Horse had not wanted the fight. It was forced on him, and he saw no other way.

Without the land, Crazy Horse said, there is no American Indian.

Mark Perry is editor of *Washington, D.C.'s City Pages*, in which another version of this article appeared.

## Taxes

Continued from page 16

brackets, it is not indexed. If the indexing of tax brackets results in less frequent tax legislation in the future, as some hope, then the EITC may increasingly disappear in coming years as an important part of the federal tax structure.

Tax legislation recently approved by the Senate Finance Committee and now pending on the Senate floor makes a modest improvement in the earned income tax credit. But the Finance Committee provision, while better than nothing, is a major disappointment.

The Finance Committee proposal raises the EITC from 10 percent to 10.5 percent of the first \$5,000 in earnings and phases out the EITC at \$11,000 rather than \$10,000. But these changes are marginal because:

- they fail to bring the point at which EITC benefits phase out up to the poverty line. As a result, some working families who live in poverty will still not qualify for the EITC;
- they fail to do anything significant to arrest or even slow down appreciably the

continuing precipitous drop of the federal income tax threshold in relation to the poverty line; and

- they fail to keep the value of the EITC in future years (when measured in constant dollars) from falling below 1984 levels.

### Soaring tax burdens.

In 1985 and subsequent years, the poverty line for a family of four and for all larger family sizes will exceed \$11,000. But the earned income tax credit, under the Senate Finance provision, would be unavailable to anyone above \$11,000. Also, the income tax threshold—now \$1,830 below the poverty line for a family of four—would still be more than \$2,000 below the poverty line in 1985 and \$2,400 below the poverty line in 1986 for a four-person family.

And the soaring tax burdens of families with earnings at the poverty line would (except for smaller families) be unaffected, since most families at the poverty line would still fail to qualify for the EITC. Finally, the value of the earned income tax credit in constant dollars would continue to erode sharply.

The failure of the Finance Committee tax bill to provide any more favorable treatment of the EITC—or to provide for indexing of the EITC—is especially disappointing since the Finance Committee was able to find room in the same tax bill for billions of dollars of new and expanded tax breaks and loopholes principally benefiting upper-income groups and particular industries. Indeed, there is a danger that if Congress enacts the Finance Committee provision, it may think it has provided one of the needed periodic adjustments in the EITC—and then ignore the EITC for another three to four years while the tax situation of poor families grows even worse. Nevertheless, the Senate provision is still more attractive than the approach taken in the tax bill passed on April 11 by the House—the House bill fails to adjust the EITC at all.

What is needed in the short term is a significant enlargement of the Senate Finance Committee EITC provision, accompanied by a provision to index the EITC at the same time that the indexing of other features of the tax code takes place. (Such an expansion of the EITC could easily be financed by removing some of the new and unnecessary tax breaks in the Finance Committee bill.) While this improvement in the EITC would offset only a small portion of the massive increases in the tax burdens of working poor families that have occurred in recent years, it would at least help prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

In the long term, broader tax reform is needed, reform that includes as one of its central elements the elimination of income tax burdens for poverty families as well as a more meaningful earned income tax credit, or some other mechanism to perform the task for which the EITC was originally intended and to offset more of the steadily escalating payroll tax burden on poor working families.

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions** and **\$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Kirby Mittelmeyer**.

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#### May 3

PSR Chicago features William Vandercook of the University of Illinois on "Civil Defense and the Social History of Nuclear War," Thursday, May 3 at 6:30 p.m. *No Place to Hide*, a film about growing up in the shadow of the bomb, will be shown. Bigler Auditorium, Children's Memorial Hospital, Lincoln and Fullerton.

#### May 17

Michael Harrington, author and Co-Chair of DSA, will speak on "1984 and Beyond: If We Win, If Reagan Wins." 7:30 p.m. at Wellington Ave. Church, 615 W. Wellington. Comments by

Bob Stark and Jenny Rohrer. \$2 donation requested. Reception will follow. Free childcare. For more information, call Jason at 871-7700.

### DES MOINES, IA

#### May 19-20

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### INDIANA, PA

#### October 24-26

Indiana University of Pennsylvania will hold a conference on the global economy. Speakers include: Richard Barnett, Dave Dyson, Barbara Ehrenreich, Ben Harrison, David Landes, Ann Markusen, June Nash, Harley Shaiken, Tim Shorrock and Immanuel Wallerstein. Information: Irwin Marcus, (412) 357-2237; History Department, IUP, Indiana, PA 15705.



# Steel

Continued from page 24

quire judgment, skill and courage. A steelworker's reputation is formed during sudden emergencies, when absence of mind or loss of nerve can mean lost production, lost wages, even the loss of a digit or limb. Though people on the outside may think the job is dirty and menial, steelworkers take pride in their work because they know it's indispensable.

The complex decisions they make when the caster goes wrong cannot be programmed, and so there's no way for a foreman to give crew members orders for all the things they have to do. This means that the work crew has considerable independence. If a foreman tries to throw his weight around, workers can make him look bad without violating company rules. A harsh foreman risks losing production—far better to give

employees latitude.

Steve and his colleagues had a lot of freedom in the casting department. Steve often brought school books to work, and he could usually trade jobs with crewmates so that he could do some schoolwork during the day. Everybody learned to do most of the jobs. Then they could beat the routine or fill in for someone who came in sick, hungover or just plain tired.

Workers used the intercom system for entertainment. Jesse, a short Mexican with a deep voice and the gift of gab, was everybody's favorite radio announcer. Jesse would tease people, make them laugh and pick fights with workers he barely knew, blocks away in the shipping department. His jokes kept everybody alert and made the tiring work bearable.

To work in the casting department was to make lifelong friends. The mill was full of cliques—people who ran, partied, drank and laughed together. These were people who'd saved each other's lives. Every day their safety depended on their watching out for one

another. They knew how crewmates worked under stress or at the end of a 12-hour shift, and how they carried their share of the load.

In the caster's last few months, back in 1981, U.S. Steel tried to save money by eliminating or combining jobs and by speeding up the work of those who remained. The workers wouldn't stand for it. Steve, as assistant grievor, co-ordinated resistance. People found a way to be busy when there was an extra task to be done. Every day, a few people called in sick, creating a shortage of hands. Things didn't go so smoothly during jam-ups. Soon the foremen were unhappy; the order to pare down the work force had caused problems.

But by July of that year, U.S. Steel closed the caster, and Steve and his buddies dispersed. Now Steve goes out of his way to avoid seeing them. He just doesn't want to hear what they're going through. The skills involved in keeping a continuous caster operating are not transferable anywhere else, and working in a steel mill is not good training for

working in a bureaucratic office or in a sales position. People who work in the mill can wear old clothes and be themselves, but when steelworkers apply for jobs in the Loop, they're lost and intimidated. It's a different world, and it's not friendly.

Employment on the fringes of the high-tech revolution, as security guards in downtown office buildings or maintenance men in local offices, may enable Chicago steelworkers to keep body and soul together, make house payments and feed their families. But losing their jobs in the mill means losing a part of themselves. Many displaced steelworkers find it hard to feel the same pride in their work, strength in their power, warmth in their friendships, and dignity in their humanity.

The casting department of U.S. Steel's South Works was a world steelworkers lived in, and now it's gone. It survives only in memory.

**David Bensman**, associate professor of labor studies at Rutgers University, is writing a book about the steel industry.

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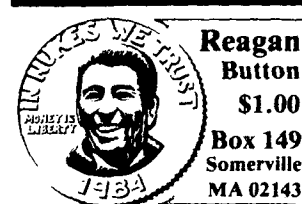
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Except for the electric furnace and beam mill, employing 800 people, U.S. Steel's South Works in Chicago officially closed on April 1. The following reminiscences date from the years when the works employed about 8,000 people.

**A**FTER SEVENTEEN YEARS IN the mill, Steve Alexander has been laid off from South Works for two years now. In many ways, it's been a good time; Steve's gone to graduate school and expects to land a job in economic development. But he finds it painful to talk about his years as a union activist in the continuous casting department. A decade of struggle against racism in the company and the union produced significant victories, but Steve is reluctant to talk about them, since mass layoffs have all but negated the hard-won gains.

Though I sympathize with Steve's

reluctance to conjure up the past, I press him for answers. I have a story to write. And as my questions prod him into remembering the life of the mill, he crosses an invisible barrier. Suddenly memories burst forth in a warm, unceasing flood. It's not the oppressive conditions Steve recalls, not the union in-fighting nor the racial and ethnic antagonisms. What Steve wants to remember is the world steelworkers made for themselves in the mill, a world where their work was important, their power secure, and their friendships lasting. For most of the men and women who worked in the continuous caster at South Works, that world will never be replaced.

In the past few months, Steve has run into many former steelworkers who found work downtown, and he's noticed two things: they all look dejected, and they all say that working in the mill was the best job they ever had. "I haven't met anyone

who said, 'I'm glad I got fired,'" Steve says.

When Steve describes work in the continuous caster, it's hard to understand his nostalgic feelings. "When you walked through the plant gate in the morning, it was like entering prison. The guard would give you a time card to punch, he could search through your clothing for a knife or a gun, he might even sniff your breath to make sure you hadn't been drinking." And when people got out of work at the end of the day, they were so drained that hitting the bottle was not uncommon, even in the parking lot.

A continuous caster allows molten steel to be transformed directly into billets, blooms or slabs for the finishing mills. Temperatures are always intense. Crew members work around white hot metal, fiery ovens, jets of flammable gas. When they put on their work clothes, their boots, and their safety equipment, they

sweat all day long, winter and summer.

And it's dangerous work. Cranes overhead swing ladles filled with two hundred tons of molten steel across the room. Jets of cold water shoot into contact with the liquid steel. Hydrogen gas feeds the ovens, always threatening to explode. When a ladle gets jammed up, one member of the work crew has to shove a lance over and over again into the boiling metal while he stands on two half-inch sheets of steel one hundred feet above the ground. As he shoves the lance into the metal, he pushes forward closer and closer to the mouth of the ladle until he's on the verge of falling in, and only the crew mates standing by his side can protect him.

If the machinery gets jammed, hundreds of tons of steel may be ruined. The crew swings into action, adjusting the heat, lancing the ladle. These tasks re-

*Continued on page 23*

# A world that lives only in memory

By David Bensman



Steelworker recalls South Works